

MY SIXTY YEARS OF THE TURF

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CHARLES MORTON AT HOME

MY SIXTY YEARS OF THE TURF

REMINISCENCES OF THE JOYS
AND SORROWS OF A RACING LIFE

BY
CHARLES MORTON

WITH FRONTISPIECE AND 16 OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

HUTCHINSON & CO. (Publishers) LTD.
34-36 Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4

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MY SIXTY YEARS OF THE TURF

CHAPTER I

IT is in reminiscent mood that I begin to write this book. For close on sixty years I have been intimately associated with the Turf, and if I am not sufficiently optimistic to be able to prophesy what is going to happen to the Sport of Kings now that our legislators have begun to cast covetous eyes upon it, I can at least indulge in that fascinating pastime known as looking backward.

What a crowded life it has been! Hurrying one after another come memories of the greatest race-horses the world has ever seen, of jockeys like the immortal Fred Archer and George Fordham, of the many picturesque figures who have graced the Turf as racing has come and gone. I have known them all, the horses and men who have indelibly inscribed their names in the history of sport, and in writing this book I am encouraged by the hope that what I have recorded will be appreciated as a humble contribution to the literature of the Turf.

They say that a divinity shapes our ends, and I suppose it must have been ordained that I should find my *métier* in the exciting atmosphere of the racecourse. I can recollect being bitten with the craze as far back as 1869, when I was about fourteen years of age. In that particular year a friend of my youth took me

to Epsom Downs to see the Oaks, and so imbued me with the fascination of the game that I definitely made up my mind that one day I, too, would ride the winner of a Classic race.

I never succeeded in doing this, but I think I went slightly better. Thirty-four years after I had seen Brigantine win the Oaks in 1869 I had the pleasure of training Our Lassie, who won the race in 1903. But even that did not represent the full measure of the success I enjoyed. In 1911 my first Derby winner, Sunstar, one of the greatest horses of our time, was trained by me to win the Blue Riband of the Turf, to be followed ten years later by another good horse in Humorist. With both of these animals I underwent dramatic experiences which I shall relate in full as the book goes on.

At one time or another I have won all the Classic races in England, all of them for Mr. J. B. Joel, with whom I have enjoyed the happiest of associations for twenty-five years. There are very few trainers who have remained with the one master over such a long period, and it came about because Mr. Joel not only thoroughly understands the breeding and training of thoroughbred horses, but also knows human nature.

Fellow-trainers will appreciate the significance of this statement. There are innumerable wealthy men who fondly imagine that money constitutes the royal road to success on the Turf. I have trained for many of them myself, but before long I have been glad to terminate the engagement because of the impossibility of making them realize that money is not everything in this world. If it were then all the best horses would automatically belong to the millionaires, instead of which one sees the fascinating gamble of the game favouring first one and then another, not always to the detriment of the small owner.

Some of the rich men for whom I have trained could never understand that racehorses are not made of iron, any more than they could appreciate the trouble in-

volved in dealing with animals which at the best of times are always temperamental. When one of "Mr. Abington's" innumerable friends came to me in 1888 to ask whether I would not train for "The Squire," I retorted then—and I still hold the same opinion—that I did not care about training for millionaires ; they wanted too much of their own way.

One could write several books around the lives of the many interesting people for whom I have trained. "The Squire," himself, that strangely tragic figure of a mere boy inheriting a fortune of something like three million pounds, and dying when only thirty years of age, would amply fill one volume. Colonel J. T. North, the millionaire "Nitrate King" of the late eighties and nineties, Richard ("Boss") Croker, the uncrowned Tammany ruler of New York, whose exploits filled the newspapers of the world for many years, the famous Mrs. Lily Langtry, who died only a few months ago, and last, but not least, one of the greatest plungers the Turf has ever known, Robert Standish Sievier, were all people who had blazed a notable career for themselves and enjoyed their full share of the popularity that invariably surrounds the ownership of a famous horse.

The Turf has always attracted the adventurous, so perhaps it is no great wonder that romance should cling around the people who have made its history. Certainly I have had my full share of it, and helped, in my own modest way, towards the consummation of many a notable victory.

In many ways, of course, the business side of racing is a very close corporation. One only needs to take a glance at the records of the great races of the past to see how the same name keeps cropping up generation after generation. Jockeys become trainers, and in their turn have sons who also become jockeys. Nearly all the present-day trainers at Newmarket are men whose families have been in the business for many years. The Cannons, the Loates, the Sadlers,

the Wattses, the Dawsons, the Leaders, the Sherwoods, the Jarvises, and many others are household names in the history of the Turf, and I suppose they will continue to be so until the end of all time.

Well, it is a good life, and if I had my time over again I would choose no other profession. Occasionally one comes across gentlemen trainers who achieve outstanding success, but in the main it is an occupation in which the amateur has to play second fiddle to the man who has made the training of racehorses his livelihood from his earliest days.

Accompanied by a friend of the mature age of eighteen, I made my first appearance on a racecourse in 1869, having in my mind a hazy idea that I would like to become a jockey. What boy would not? A few weeks went by before the project began to assume more practical shape, until one day at Windsor I plucked up courage to speak to Mr. Alec Taylor, the father of the late Manton trainer. He was a gruff old fellow and nearly frightened the life out of me.

“Well, my lad,” he growled, “what do you want?”

“I came to see if you want any boys.”

“What do you know about it?”

“Nothing, sir.”

Mr. Taylor took a good look at me, smiled, and after much deep thought informed me that I might possibly be of some use.

“I’ll take you as an apprentice for seven years,” he said at last.

“That’s too long,” objected the youth who was looking after my interests, and he dragged me away on the understanding that if Mr. Taylor would take me for three years I should go to him. However, nothing came of the matter and I eventually launched myself on the perilous sea of racing with a trainer named Balchin who had a small stable at Telscombe, near Brighton.

Then chance, which plays such an important part in our lives, took hold of the situation and definitely determined my career. I had a brother employed in a stable at Wantage with one of the most famous racing men in England, the redoubtable Tom Parr. Mr. Parr, whose fame, like good wine, needs no bush, took me under his wing and guided my youthful footsteps in the complicated profession of training thoroughbred horses.

He was the finest judge of a horse and the best trainer I have ever known in all my life. For instance, he bought for £40 from the celebrated Admiral Rous a famous horse named Weathergage, who paid tribute to his knowledge of bloodstock by afterwards winning the Goodwood Stakes, the Cesarewitch, and other good races. Another lucky purchase for the trifling sum of £10 brought him the winner of a Cambridgeshire, so it will be realized that he was a master from whom any pupil had much to learn.

I remained with him for ten years and then, as he was getting on in life, he gave me the opportunity of starting for myself. I must pass briefly over the various vicissitudes I underwent for some years, leaving it to a later chapter in the book to relate my experiences of fifty years ago. Several well-known horses came through my hands, notably one named Bird of Freedom whom I bought at the Doncaster sales in 1883 for the modest sum of 150 guineas. From such trifling beginnings do we rise to fame! Bird of Freedom won many good races, notably the old Epsom Grand Prize, which has now been supplanted by the Coronation Cup, and was sold to Mr. H. E. Tidy for £2000, who re-sold him to Mr. D. Baird for £6000. Bird of Freedom went on to do great things on the Turf. He won the Ascot Gold Cup and also the Gold Vase, and even as prizes went at that time he was worth a fortune to his lucky owner.

I was then training at Wantage for a number of

people, including a couple of well-remembered professional racing men named Arthur Cooper and Johnny O'Neill. We made a trip to Ireland where we bought a few horses, among them a two-year-old named Bismarck by a steeplechase horse named Pride of Prussia. I soon discovered him to be a good one and put him in a nursery handicap at the old Epsom Autumn Meeting, which has passed out of the memory of all but the veteran race-goers. According to my calculations, we had three stone in hand and he should have won easily. But something went wrong. He could do no better than run third. Five weeks later we ran him at Derby, and backed him to win a fortune. Woodburn rode him but could only get fourth. It made me mad, because I knew if the colt would only do his best he could not possibly lose. I tried him again and again, but on every occasion he let me down with a thud.

It was too astounding to be true. In the spring of the following year I galloped him with my two-year-olds and he literally left them half-way down the course. Once more did I give this arch-deceiver a chance. I took him to the old Croydon meeting in 1888 (since defunct) and ran him in the Woodside Plate. Half-way from home he was ten lengths in front but then his courage deserted him and he could only just scramble home from a lot of horses worth absolutely nothing. Cooper said to me: "Now you see what he is. I'd shoot him."

But being of a persevering turn of mind I put the wretched animal in a welter race at Windsor and this is how I came to make the acquaintance of the famous "Mr. Abington," who came into this world with the nomenclature of George Alexander Baird. He was more popularly known as "The Squire," and I should say that he was one of the most curious people I have ever come across. Only a few years before he had inherited a million pounds in good hard cash, with another couple of millions to come. Everybody

knew him and everybody spent his spare time working out schemes to relieve him of his superfluous wealth. And, by Jove, didn't they succeed!

O'Neill came to me the day before the race at Windsor and informed me that "The Squire" would like to ride Bismarck. I did not mind. The finest jockey in the world could not make the brute put any heart into his work, and so when Baird asked me how he should ride the horse, I replied: "Anyhow you like."

Down went the flag, and everybody shouted out: "False start!" Instead of which it was merely Bismarck taking it into his head to run up to his real form. He came home alone, and after the race Baird remarked to me that he was a champion.

"Can I ride him again?" he asked. He would give anything to ride a winner.

"Certainly," I said.

He was so pleased, indeed, that he deputed one of his friends to approach me about training for him. Goodness only knows how many horses he had; I doubt whether he knew himself. They were in different stables all over England, but his idea was that I should take over his principal establishment, Bedford Lodge, Newmarket, where he had something like sixty horses.

But I did not greatly fancy the idea, and I informed his deputy that I preferred remaining at Wantage.

"But he has got plenty of money," expostulated the ambassador, as though that were everything in the world.

"I don't care," I said. "These millionaires aren't altogether to my liking.

But evidently "The Squire" was determined to have me. A month or two afterwards the emissary once more appeared and begged of me to take over Baird's horses. I could have any agreement I liked, spend whatever money I fancied, and generally

consider myself the possessor of "The Squire's" millions. Cooper and O'Neill could not understand my refusal.

"What's the matter with you?" they enquired in astonishment when I told them the news. "You'll never get another chance like it."

But even that prospect did not appeal to me, and only on being advised by one of my patrons, Mr. H. E. Tidy, the well-known solicitor, not to refuse such a splendid opportunity did I leave Wantage and go to Newmarket. Difficulties innumerable at once cropped up. When I went to Weatherby's to get the special licence required to train at headquarters I was informed that while the Stewards had no objection to my keeping the horses of my other patrons, they uncompromisingly refused to permit a couple of professional racing men like Cooper and O'Neill to be associated with one of the biggest stables in Newmarket. This meant transferring Bismarck to another establishment. He was in the Stewards' Cup of that year and looked like winning it, so I sent him to Alfred Day's place at Arundel and told him not to work the horse as he was as fit as a fiddle. Alfred evidently got a little anxious and galloped the horse to make certain that there was nothing the matter with him. He had 7st. 12lbs. to carry and ridden by Willie Warne he came over the hill by himself with the race at his mercy. Less than a furlong from the post he was leading by ten lengths, when he suddenly swerved right across the course and deliberately put his head over the rails. Something came up and beat him a short head and I could have wept in my mortification.

The four years I spent at Bedford Lodge training for "Mr. Abington," as he was officially known, were amongst the most interesting years in my life. Mrs. Langtry, then at the height of her histrionic fame, also had some horses in the stable. Racing did not then claim her interest as it did in later years, though when I had a winner for her I made it my duty

to go to the theatre in London where she was playing and inform her, so that she might take her friends to the course to enjoy the victory.

Various troubles combined to make me wish to sever my connection with "The Squire." When I first began to train for him there was no more companionable man in the world, but after a time his innumerable friends began to get the better of him. He would never come to a meeting unless he could be sure of riding a winner and I had to use my own judgment in the running of his horses. He had a very useful animal named *King of Diamonds*. I took this horse to Epsom intending to run him in the *Egmont Plate* when, just before weighing-out, the jockey, one of Baird's closest friends, came up to me and said :

"I have just left 'The Squire,' and he says he does not want to run *King of Diamonds*."

It made me exceedingly annoyed. Four times had I brought *King of Diamonds* to run in a race and on each occasion I had been instructed not to run him. So I replied :

"I don't care. The horse is going to run."

King of Diamonds duly won the race, whereupon I received the information that "The Squire" was very upset about it.

"Then he had better get another trainer," I said.

Mrs. Langtry immediately heard about the matter and tried hard to heal the breach. However, I had had enough of "The Squire" and his friends, and after a good deal of bother I left Bedford Lodge.

In a later chapter I shall have a good deal more to say about "The Squire." Some little time after I had left him, one of his friends came to me at Sandown Park and said :

"Look here, 'The Squire' cannot understand why you won't speak to him."

"I have got nothing against him," I said. "I can't stand his friends."

“ Well, he'd like you to see him.”

I had no objection, so I met Baird, shook hands with him, and after a valedictory drink we parted on the best of terms.

I am briefly enumerating the principal incidents of my career, so that what I have to relate subsequently will be readily understood. Having enjoyed a notable run of success for some years, I had plenty of opportunities of training for wealthy people, and after I had parted from “ The Squire ” I was approached about taking over the horses belonging to Colonel North, who a few years previously had returned to England with a fortune made out of Chilian nitrates. His horses had been trained at Newmarket with Robert Sherwood, whose son succeeded him not long afterwards, and in the same stable there were also animals belonging to Lord Randolph Churchill, the father of Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Brydges-Willyams, brother-in-law of Lord Burnham, and Colonel Oliver Montagu.

Some little trouble had arisen. Colonel North owned a very good horse called Nunthorpe which had won both the City and Suburban and the Jubilee. Unfortunately, on each occasion when the horse won, another one from the same stable had run and Colonel North had put his money on the loser. Naturally, being a man very much accustomed to having things go in the way that he ordained, he grew rather wrath. He roundly accused Sherwood senior of wilfully misleading him, whereupon Sherwood did what any other self-respecting trainer would have done, told Colonel North that he had better take his horses elsewhere. After endless wrangling both Colonel North and Colonel Montagu looked round and fixed upon me as the individual who might best satisfy their idea of the perfect trainer.

I must confess that I did not altogether fancy the job. Self-made men are all right in their way, but it is only occasionally that you find them amenable to

reason when they descend upon the Turf. Having been accustomed to accomplish anything they set out to do, they sometimes find it rather galling to be compelled to fall into line with hundreds of other people who own racehorses. To take pot-luck at the Sport of Kings makes no appeal to the average millionaire, and Colonel North, having made his affluent way in the world entirely by his pushful personality, was not exactly the type of owner to remain in the game for long. Racing is not a pastime for the sportsmen of doubtful constancy. There will be good times and bad times, and to succeed at it one must always be prepared to take the rough with the smooth.

However, when I was approached about training for Colonel North and Colonel Montagu I decided that I might just as well see if I could succeed where other people had failed, and accordingly I took over Chetwynd House at Newmarket and trained there with a fair amount of success till the end of the season. During this time I had charge of a very useful horse called El Diablo, who on one occasion beat Sir Hugo, the winner of the Derby and, a fortnight later, that great horse Orme belonging to the Duke of Westminster. It was Orme's third race in a week, in addition to which Colonel North's animal received a good deal of weight from him, but, nevertheless, he beat the champion fairly and squarely. On each occasion Colonel North backed his horse to win him some thousands of pounds, and he was so delighted that he sent me various telegrams and letters of congratulation fervently expressing the hope that we would sweep the board the following year.

But towards the end of the season some slight unpleasantness occurred between us. Several times he insisted upon horses running when they were not in a condition to run, and when I informed him that I would be glad to be relieved of my post he would not at first believe me. On several occasions he sent his secretary to me authorizing him to accept any terms

I might like to make. Apparently he was willing for me to continue on my own conditions, but I had no intention of going on. However, we parted on friendly terms and Robert Sherwood's son took over his horses.

Fate has always thrown me into contact with the more extraordinary personalities of the Turf. In the early nineties there came to England that somewhat astounding product of the American political world, "Boss" Croker, who had resigned from Tammany Hall with an enormous fortune. The "Boss," an Irishman by birth, decided to settle in England and, having nothing to do with his money, fixed upon the Turf as a suitable channel for ridding himself of some of his wealth. Mr. Charles Mills, the well-known racing commissioner, for whom I trained a few horses, knew Croker well and suggested to him the desirability of installing me as his private trainer.

I duly met the "Boss" and found him to be a great fellow. Of middle height, thick-set, rugged in face and rugged in speech, he knew what he wanted and, furthermore, lost no time in making up his mind about anything. He bought Antwicks Manor, in Berkshire, speedily spent a fortune upon it, and embarked upon a campaign which might have had disastrous results to the British thoroughbred if it had met with any prolonged success. Briefly, the "Boss" possessed the idea that the American racehorse was infinitely superior to the English, and in pursuance of that idea he brought over from America dozens and dozens of animals who were going, according to their owner, to make hacks of everything we had here.

Even the animals with which Croker began operations in England had a history behind them. They had originally belonged to a famous hotel-keeper of San Francisco. This individual apparently got into trouble with the Stewards in his native land for what the Americans now describe as moral turpitude. According to Croker, who ought to have known, he used to travel the race meetings not only with horses, but also

with a harem. The Stewards did not mind his four-legged friends : they objected to the members' stands being patronized by ladies whose virtue was not on a par with their beauty, and so it was gently intimated to the aforesaid hotel-keeper that he must choose between the horses and the harem. A nasty predicament for any man to be in ! He elected to stand by his in-amoratas and so it came about that he had to sell his horses. "Boss" Croker bought them and brought them over to England. But even then things did not run smoothly. Weatherby's informed Croker that the Jockey Club would not permit his horses to run in England, and the "Boss" had to interpose influential diplomacy in the person of a well-known American banker and sportsman before the Stewards could be induced to change their minds. I shall have more to say about "Boss" Croker later. He was quite a likeable personality in his way, but he did not understand English ideas of training, and I often told him I thought he would be much better suited by getting an American to look after his horses here.

The next individual of note for whom I had the honour of training was a man whose fame needs no adjectives from me. So long as the Turf endures the name of Robert Standish Sievier will remain a memorable figure among the outstanding personalities who have made racing what it is. Even the manner in which I came to train for the redoubtable "Bob" was typical of the man. Strolling one day in the paddock attached to my stables at Wantage, I espied a man entering the yard leading a horse. I asked him his business and he informed me that Mr. Sievier had instructed him to bring the horse to me to train, adding that it belonged to Mr. Sievier's wife, Lady Mabel.

"This is the first I've heard of such a thing," I said. And it was. Not a word had "Bob" either written or breathed concerning the training of his horses. I knew him well enough, of course, who

didn't? However, I accepted the compliment in the spirit it was offered and so began my connection with a man who in a very short space of time achieved marvels of success. In the beginning he bought a few platers and ran them with varying fortune, and then, being of a decidedly ambitious turn of mind, suggested that we should go to Ireland to find something capable of winning a good race. We could find nothing of outstanding merit and coming back on the boat from Ireland "Bob" broached the idea of going to the Newmarket July Sales when the recently deceased Duke of Westminster's horses were being put up for auction.

"This is a wonderful opportunity," said "Bob." "Nobody has ever had a chance of getting animals like them."

All of which was quite true. The late Duke stood foremost among the breeders of bloodstock, not only in England, but throughout the world, and the mighty horses he owned had made for themselves a reputation which even now has never been surpassed.

"I don't think you will succeed in getting anything good," I said to "Bob." "John Porter is certain to buy all the best ones for the young Duke. Or, at any rate, the other people in the Kingsclere stable will never let them go."

But "Bob," always an optimist, refused to believe me, and we went to Newmarket where, as a matter of history, we bought one of the greatest racehorses the world has ever seen, Sceptre, the winner of the Two Thousand Guineas, One Thousand Guineas, the Oaks, and the St. Leger. Sceptre should also have won the Derby, and nothing but sheer bad luck stood in the way of her accomplishing a performance which has never been done before and is hardly likely to be done in the future. Of the sensational successes which came our way the following year with Sceptre, Duke of Westminster, and other horses I shall write later. I went on training for Mr. Sievier until the end

of 1901 season when Mr. J. B. Joel, who was then beginning to try his luck upon the Turf, made me an attractive offer to take charge of his horses. I eventually made up my mind to accept it and this marked the opening of a happy twenty-five years spent in the employ of a man who did not mind the money involved so long as he succeeded in achieving his ambition to own some of the best horses of his time. Of the innumerable notable victories which came our way, I can mention two Derbies, two St. Legers, four Oaks, a Two Thousand Guineas, and two One Thousand Guineas, memorable days when the black jacket and scarlet cap were making history for the Childwick Bury stud.

If only because of the fact that he bred all his own Classic winners, Mr. Joel is fully entitled to all the successes that have come his way. But few of our owners have had the good fortune, or have been possessed of the sound judgment, to achieve such striking results, and as I continue to write I shall deal with some of the famous horses bred at the Northaw House and Childwick Bury studs, such as Sunstar, Humorist, Jest, Your Majesty, and other Classic winners who have left their mark on the Turf.

Nor shall I confine myself to the comparatively dry technicalities of breeding and racing. There is a fund of human anecdote surrounding racehorses and the people connected with them, some of it mirthful, at times dramatic, and occasionally tragic. The story of how Sunstar won the Derby of 1911 with only three sound legs, of how that gallant colt Humorist followed him to fame ten years later while all the time unknown to me he was suffering from consumption will, I hope, stir the imagination of the millions of people to whom the thunder of the flying hooves and the breathless struggle for victory is for ever a thrill to be remembered.

CHAPTER II

HOW our old friend Nat Gould would have revelled in the story of Sunstar! I have been associated with many dramatic events on the Turf, some of which have culminated fortunately, some the reverse. In the case of the Derby winner of 1911 Dame Fortune came to my aid, and after a period of hairbreadth suspense which would have delighted the soul of any novelist, I had the satisfaction of seeing Sunstar gallantly fighting his way to victory against odds that had appeared almost overwhelming.

Romance surrounded the career of Sunstar right from the very beginning, and I would like to relate in some detail the full story of this gallant horse, of how from being a good second-class two-year-old, he developed into a champion and wound up his all too brief career on the Turf by winning within a few weeks the Two Thousand Guineas, the Newmarket Stakes, and the Derby. But he did still more. We found it impossible to run him again and he was retired to Childwick Bury to take the place of Sundridge, a duty he fulfilled more than successfully.

Sundridge, whom I might term the founder of the Childwick Bury stud in Mr. Joel's time, was himself something of a chance horse. He originally belonged to Sir Samuel Scott, one of the Stewards of the Jockey Club, who after winning some good races with him, offered the horse for sale. It rather puzzled me why Sir Samuel wanted to sell such a useful animal, and after Mr. Joel had bought the horse I looked him over very carefully to ascertain the reason. Much to my astonishment I could find nothing wrong and I

could only conclude that he had gone in the wind or possessed some hidden fault which would only be discovered afterwards. However, Mr. Joel purchased Sundridge for 1450 guineas and told me to keep the horse in training.

Leaving Sundridge's racing career on one side for the moment, I will pass on to the time when he had retired to the paddocks and was busily engaged getting any number of good winners. I should explain here that every year Mr. J. B. Joel and his brother are in the habit of sending a few mares to each other's stallions, and in 1908 Mr. S. B. Joel had a little mare called Doris, a mere pony who looked much too small to be worth breeding from. But Mr. J. B. Joel, having a keen eye in these matters, thought there were possibilities about Doris. His brother was not particularly interested. He remarked :

"Oh, I don't think she is much good. She is not big enough. You can have her if you like."

Now, could anything demonstrate the luck of racing more effectually than acquiring one of the finest brood mares we have ever known by such means? Doris, herself only a pony, bred not only Sunstar but also many other good winners, notable among them being Bright, Princess Dorrie, White Star, Radiant, Lady Portland, and Selsey Bill. Year after year did she pay tribute to the man who had appreciated her worth, and to-day, so that all the world may see, there is a handsome monument to her at Childwick Bury emblematic of the gratitude with which she is remembered.

Sunstar came to me in 1909 with a batch of yearlings from Childwick Bury. I usually received about six or eight at a time, sometimes as many as twenty, and it used to take me a few days to get them sorted out. When I had gone over them thoroughly and made up my mind, Mr. Joel would ring me up and ask what I thought of them and which I liked best. In Sunstar's case I had no difficulty in deciding that he was

quite a nice colt, nothing to rave about, but, nevertheless, an animal certain to win races of some sort. In any case, it is unwise to be too optimistic when you are expressing an opinion about yearlings. All manner of fates can befall them and you do better to wait until their two-year-old days before giving vent to any more decided ideas.

At all events, Sunstar did fairly well as a two-year-old without making any great stir in the world. He won the International Plate at Kempton Park, beating some useful animals, and I might take the opportunity of recording here that the following race on the same day, the Bedfont Plate, worth a mere £107 to the winner, was won by a colt named Prince Palatine who afterwards developed into the best horse in the country and was subsequently bought by Mr. Joel for the then record sum of £40,000 !

Without quite reaching the top of the tree, Sunstar continued to train on in a way that gave every encouragement for his future. In the Champagne Stakes at Doncaster he was beaten by Pietri, whom he afterwards soundly trounced both in the Two Thousand Guineas and the Derby, and he ended up his two-year-old season with the best form he had yet shown me, a dead-heat in the Hopeful Stakes at Newmarket with that very smart sprinter Borrow, who afterwards went on and won the Middle Park Plate. Let me interpose here that the Joel brothers have always opposed each other on the racecourse. Thus, when Sunstar was a two-year-old, he was beaten by Mr. S. B. Joel's horse St. Nat, just one of the many thrilling duels that have taken place between their horses. Who will ever forget that sensational race at Goodwood when Mr. J. B. Joel's horse Spanish Prince beat his brother's champion Sunder, with the two crack jockeys of the day in Frank Wootton and Danny Maher riding for their lives ?

"I think I will beat you to-day," Mr. J. B. Joel would say to his brother.

“ Oh, we shall see,” he would be told.

Four times out of five when the brothers did clash the black jacket and scarlet cap would prevail, but, in any case, it was a clean-fought battle in which both men backed their champions.

I did not seriously entertain any ideas of Sunstar winning the Classics until the spring of 1911. When a horse finishes racing for the season and is eased off in his work for some months, it is difficult to know how he is going to shape when he resumes operations three or four months later, and I had certainly built up no premature hopes about Sunstar until I got him to work again in March, when it dawned upon me that he had developed into a grand horse. He gave me the impression of smothering everything else in the stable, and I don't mind saying that I had some very useful animals at that time. In a full racing gallop he could lose everything we had and I could then see that, all going well, we had a potential Derby winner.

On the Good Friday Mr. Joel came down to Wantage with a party of friends to see the horses tried. I had thirty of them out at exercise, and while they were walking about Mr. Joel pointed to one of the horses and said : “ What is that ? ”

“ That's Sunstar,” I replied.

“ Surely he has grown and improved ? ”

“ Yes,” I said, “ he has certainly gone on in the right way.”

Sunstar undoubtedly looked the king of them all, and it proves how much better he must have grown for Mr. Joel to pick him out from all the other horses, particularly as at that period I had some of the best animals in England. But being of a cautious turn of mind, I contented myself with remarking that we should be better able to judge in a few minutes when we had tried Sunstar.

The great thing in having a trial is to have the proper tackle, and in this instance there could be no complaint

about dearth of the right material. That gallant old warrior Dean Swift, Spanish Prince, The Story, Lycaon, and other good horses were to take part in it. But, furthermore, and most important of all, I was trying the horses on a gallop known as Faringdon Road, a particularly severe stretch of ground where *it is all on the collar with no dip to give the horses a breather*. Off they went, and when they had gone half-way Mr. Joel remarked to me that the three-year-old was going wonderfully well. About a furlong from the finish Sunstar was still well in front and practically pulling his rider out of the saddle.

"By Jove, the three-year-old has won it," shouted Mr. Joel in his excitement.

"Not yet," I said, wondering whether the older horses would gradually wear Sunstar down. But he maintained his lead and won virtually pulling up. The jockeys who rode in the gallop assured me that it was one of the finest trials they had ever ridden. I had put a stable boy up on Sunstar, but I had regular jockeys on the others and with the trial tackle engaged it seemed certain that Sunstar stood revealed as the best horse of his year.

Still, to make assurance doubly sure, we thought it advisable to run some of the horses in public to discover the actual worth of the trial. About ten days afterwards we started The Story in the Prince of Wales Stakes at the Epsom Spring Meeting, and carrying the crushing impost of 10 st. 4lbs. he won easily. It not only confirmed the result of the trial at Wantage, but it also made Sunstar appear a wonderful horse. If he could beat The Story in a common canter at even weights as he had done, then the Derby and the Two Thousand Guineas were ours. I recollect that after the trial at Wantage Mr. Joel said to me on going back to lunch that if the gallop was true there could be nothing in the Two Thousand Guineas to beat us, to which I replied that we would not know for certain until we had run something. Considering that The

Story ran last in the trial and yet could run at Epsom with 10st. 4 lbs. and win it shows what a wonder horse Sunstar had become. The week after The Story had confirmed all our hopes and fears, Spanish Prince, ridden by Frank Wootton, won the Victoria Cup in a common hack canter, and I need not remark that this is a race which invariably attracts some of the best horses in England. Over a mile, Sunstar, giving him two years, was almost as good as Spanish Prince at even weights, which meant that the Derby was practically a foregone conclusion.

The people who read this story of mine will hardly require to be told that the possession of a Classic favourite is something of a mixed blessing. When you have a horse on whom a fortune depends you are apt to become doubly fearful. I remember that about this time we had a South African jockey named Shaw who had come over to us on the recommendation of Sir David Harris, who had said to Mr. Joel :

“ You haven't got a jockey in your stable ; give this man a chance.”

Mr. Joel asked me if we would win the Two Thousand Guineas and I said yes.

“ Well,” he said, “ I don't feel very much like giving this South African the mount on Sunstar. We know next to nothing about him and it is asking a little too much to give him the ride when we have got such a good thing.”

Nobody could blame us for not wanting to engage an unknown jockey. He had never ridden for us in a race, only in trials, and ultimately Mr. Joel and myself decided that it was too much of a risk. By way of compensation we put him up on Lycaon, whom we also had in the race, but, of course, he felt very dissatisfied. I saw him outside the weighing-room at Newmarket after the Two Thousand looking very glum and asked him what was the matter.

“ Well,” he said, “ I don't think I have been fairly treated. Here Sunstar was a certainty. Anyone

could have ridden him and won, and yet you would not give me the chance."

In the ordinary course of events we should have engaged Frank Wootton or Danny Maher to ride Sunstar, but they were not available, and I said to Mr. Joel that the next best jockey we could get would be the Frenchman, George Stern, who was certainly quite equal to anyone in England. Stern had never seen Sunstar until he came over to ride the colt in the Two Thousand, but he immediately formed a very high opinion of him and found the horse all that I predicted.

He had never even ridden Sunstar in a gallop. He came on the course just before the race, had a look at his mount, got up on him and went out to win the first of the Classics as though he and Sunstar had known each other for months on end. He told me when he came back that he had an easy win and never had to urge the horse to an effort. Stedfast, a very good horse belonging to Lord Derby, ran second to him, while Lycaon, also owned by Mr. Joel, ran third. But Sunstar won so easily that from the very moment he passed the post he automatically became a hot favourite for the Derby. In fact Mr. S. B. Joel took a bet of £3000 to £2000 about his brother's horse in the first flush of the excitement which is ever present after a big race is won and lost.

Then the sensations began to gather around us thick and fast. I would not usually think of giving the Derby favourite a public gallop unless it were absolutely necessary. That year, 1911, was particularly unfavourable for the training of horses. It had been an exceptionally hot spring and for weeks on end not a drop of rain had fallen to soften the ground. However, we decided to run Sunstar in the Newmarket Stakes. He was perfectly sound and had to have a gallop or two between the Two Thousand Guineas and the Derby. We thought he might just as well have a gallop in public and incidentally pick up a nice stake.



SUGAR WINING, DERRY, IOWA

The critics took exception to the manner in which Sunstar won the Newmarket Stakes. George Stern again rode the horse and everyone expected him to win by at least a dozen lengths, instead of which he merely won the race by a couple of lengths.

“Anything the matter with him?” I asked Stern. “Was he lazy?”

“Oh, very,” said George, smiling, “but he could have pulled a cart and won it.”

All went merrily as the proverbial marriage bell until nine days before the Derby. Even the springy turf at Wantage had grown harder and harder and the air was full of thunder which kept me in a continual state of foreboding. Sunstar had become a raging hot favourite for the Derby and Mr. Joel and his friends stood to win a fortune. I knew, of course, that at any time Sunstar or any other horse might go lame. One morning after doing a mile and a quarter exercise gallop, what I dreaded took place. Sunstar pulled up so lame that he could hardly put his foot to the ground. Fortunately, the other horses were some distance away, and I said to the boy who was riding him:

“Let him go on.”

The boy looked at me as though I were not in my right senses, but he went on, when I again told him to stop.

“All right,” I said. “Now, I don’t want you to tell anybody about this. It may be nothing and we don’t want any scares in the newspapers. This horse has been backed to win a fortune. If you keep quiet there will be a nice present for you. If you don’t there’ll be nothing.”

I had very good reasons for wanting to keep this sensational mishap a secret. There are thousands of people ready to believe that if a Derby favourite goes wrong the owner and everybody connected with the animal have made untold sums by laying against the horse. Heaven alone knows why they should think

such a thing, but they do and therefore I much preferred to say nothing about Sunstar's breakdown until I knew for certain that he would be unable to run in the Derby.

The boy faithfully promised me to say nothing. When I got back to the stables I examined Sunstar and found, as I expected, that he had strained his suspensory ligaments. It was just a toss-up whether or not I could get him to the post. I immediately got on the telephone to Mr. Joel.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"Can you stand a shock?"

"Yes," he said, "what is it?"

"The horse has cracked up."

"Good God," he said. "Is it hopeless?"

"I'm afraid so," I answered, feeling just about as miserable as any man could feel when he sees a great prize slowly slipping from his grasp. "But I shouldn't breathe a word to anybody just now. If I can get him to the post he might win even then. He is so fit that only an absolute breakdown can stop him. In any case," I added, "don't despair. I may be able to exercise him twice a day without putting any great strain upon him. I'll get him to the post somehow and then no one can say we haven't done our best."

It may be thought to be an extraordinary thing to even dream of running a lame horse in the Derby, but I was in the somewhat invidious position of training an animal who might be patched up to win just one more race and then, whatever happened, to write finis to his career. The trainer of the Derby favourite is something like a public trustee; it is his bounden duty to deliver the horse at the post fit and ready to run for his life. I could hardly do this with Sunstar because he was already lame, but I might achieve a slight miracle and get him sound enough to run one last race so that his owner might keep faith with the thousands of people who had backed him to win. I knew for certain, win or lose, that it would be

Sunstar's last race. Mr. Joel himself gave no thought whatever to any loss he might incur by the horse being scratched. He instructed me to spare neither pains nor expense to get rid of the lameness sufficiently to allow the horse to run.

Day and night I spent with Sunstar treating his legs, never knowing from one moment to the next when he would break down for good. Somehow or other the news got out and the Ring began to lay against him. Mr. Joel retaliated by backing his horse more heavily still and the situation resolved itself into a desperate struggle to patch up Sunstar so that we might give the public a run for their money. I had to do a certain amount of work with him, but I did not think he could possibly have a chance of winning. In my own mind I could see the field coming down the hill to Tattenham Corner with Sunstar pulling up lame and hobbling in an ignominious last to the groans of the multitude.

All sorts of tales were rife about what was wrong with him. If it had become generally known that he had broken down badly everybody would have at once said it was a put-up job. If this were not enough, rumours were flying about that Sunstar was going to be nobbled! I never paid much heed to such tales, but I knew what Sunstar's victory would cost the Ring if he won and so I took precautions to guard him. A man remained in the stable yard until midnight, when another man took his place until daylight. We padlocked the favourite's door, put a flashlight on it, and generally indulged in all those safeguards which are so popular with Nat Gould and his numerous successors.

The nobbling stories were still filling the air when we arrived at Epsom for the Derby meeting. I took my horses as usual to Mr. Goby's establishment and got the local police to keep an eye on the horse in addition to stationing a man of my own outside the stable door. Then I heard that someone was going

to put George Stern over the rails during the race, and I think it was then that I laughed for the first time since Sunstar went lame. If there was ever a jockey in this world who had no need to take a nurse around with him, it was George Stern. It brings to my mind a little incident which once took place within my hearing. I happened to be outside the weighing-room at Epsom one day and heard a bit of a row going on.

“Oh, George, I am so sorry,” said a pleading voice. “I didn’t mean to do it.”

“All right,” replied George, “if you do things like that to me you can expect something.”

Slightly interested, I walked in to find a certain jockey looking very sorry for himself. After I got outside I asked George Stern what the trouble was.

“He tried to put me over the rails. He was ten yards away and he came bang at me, and if my horse had not been strong on his legs I would have gone over.”

A more fearless rider I never knew. If he wanted to get into any particular position in a race he usually got there. Before the Derby was run a fellow-trainer said to me :

“I bet you anything you like that when they reach the straight your horse will be on the inside.” And so he was.

Sensations continued without cessation. On the morning of the Derby it was tremendously hot. England seemed full of rumours about Sunstar being lame and unable to run. Scores of people professed to know that the horse had been nobbled, that the bookmakers had got hold of him and that anything might happen. I spent a busy morning opening dozens upon dozens of telegrams from various friends and well-wishers, some of them wishing me luck, others again requiring my definite assurance about Sunstar winning. To cap it all there came a telegram from a gentleman who said :

“Do not be dismayed by rumours to the detriment of your horse. I dreamed last night that he would win, and I am a good dreamer.”

So, taking what comfort I could from this message, I left for the course where Sunstar would put to the test one of the greatest gambles the Turf has ever known. It was the Coronation year of King George the Fifth and the Derby meeting of that year was crowded to suffocation with the biggest concourse of people I have ever seen. The air was electrical in more senses of the word than one. There had been no rain for many weeks, there were stories flying all over the place that the favourite had been “got at,” backed up by the most brilliant cosmopolitan gathering I have ever seen. I left Mr. Goby’s place with two or three friends intending to drive to the course, but the traffic was so thick that we came to a dead stop and looked like missing the first race. Anxious to reach the stand quickly to see Mr. Joel, I suggested that we walked the remainder of the distance. Even then it was slow travelling and while ambling slowly along studying my race-card, not looking where I was going, I caught my foot in a hole and pitched over, badly injuring my shoulder. On reaching the weighing-room I found it impossible to raise my arm, and my head lad had to saddle Sunstar.

Of the race itself little need be said. Short of breaking down during the actual progress, I felt certain that Sunstar would now win. The start of the Derby course is half a mile uphill, and I knew that once Sunstar could get round Tattenham Corner safe and sound the Blue Riband of the Turf would be ours. A furlong and a half from home when Sunstar was well in front, Stern felt the horse falter under him and for just a second thought that he had again gone lame. But, desperately anxious to win an English Derby for the first time, he just touched the horse with the whip and away he went again to beat Stedfast by two lengths amidst the mightiest cheers I have ever listened to.

It was a magnificent performance. Sunstar literally won the race on three legs, a raging hot favourite with millions of pounds betted on him by people who had never fully known the real truth of the rumours that were rife. He came back to the paddock lame and could hardly walk to his stable. I knew then for certain that he had run his last race, and if the Derby had been won at the expense of any subsequent victories on the Turf, at least I had the satisfaction of knowing that I had done my duty and got the favourite first past the post.

Sunstar never ran again. Mr. Joel had him at Childwick Bury for some little time afterwards when, after the horse had apparently become sound again, he sent him back to Wantage to see whether he would stand training once more. In the very first canter I gave him the lameness again manifested itself and I had to return him to Childwick Bury where he speedily earned for himself a reputation as one of the best sires in England.

Sunstar might have won the Triple Crown that year provided, of course, all had gone well with him. However, we could not complain. To have won the Derby with a horse who had only three sound legs is a feat not often achieved, and if no worse luck befalls me I shall not complain.

It will always be a moot point whether Sunstar would have beaten Prince Palatine. It would be foolish of me to deny that the latter was anything but a smashing good horse. But I would very much like to say this: In the St. Leger, Prince Palatine beat my second string Lycaon by six lengths. On the trial ground at Wantage over the Derby distance, Sunstar beat Lycaon by thirty lengths. In my own mind I have no doubt whatever that Sunstar would have won the St. Leger, though many people have been doubtful as to how he would have fared against the actual winner. However, Sunstar never ran and therefore the problem did not arise. I recollect that

Mr. Harry Slowburn came to me not long after the Derby and asked me if I wanted to back Lycaon for the St. Leger. I did not particularly fancy the colt, but, nevertheless, I took £10,000 to £300, a good price all things considered.

Shortly before the race Mr. Slowburn began to grow slightly anxious, not because of the amount he had laid me, but because he wanted to know how things stood. Did Lycaon have a chance? I could only tell him what I knew—that he was more than a stone behind Sunstar. Possibly friend Harry thought I had something up my sleeve. To make certain that he, at any rate, would not be forgotten if there was any coup afoot he told me I could lay him £1800 to £300 about Lycaon and keep the remaining £8200 to nothing.

Had Providence been kind, I would have been able to record that Lycaon fittingly terminated this eventful year by winning the St. Leger, but, alas, he could do no better than get second to Prince Palatine.

CHAPTER III

THIRTY or forty years ago when life was freer than it is to-day, and a man was able to call his money his own, there used to be dozens of notable personalities who for a few years made a great stir in the racing world and then, for one reason or another, dropped out of the public eye. But they have never been forgotten and some of them, particularly the picturesque plungers of the eighties and nineties, were men of whom many a good story is still told.

Where are the gallant gamblers of to-day? There are certainly owners who will have £10,000 on a horse, but they are few and far between and grow steadily less as the years roll on. Nor are there any big professional backers such as used to decorate the Turf in the days when I was younger.

I make an exception in the case of Charles Hannam. "Old England," as they call him, is easily the cleverest backer the Turf has ever known. For forty years he and I have been acquainted, and Charles, like Tennyson's famous brook, seems to go on for ever. Alone of all the thousands of men who have tried to get a fortune by backing horses, he has stood the test of time and successfully defied the innumerable attempts to send him into that abyss into which most of the plucky plungers ultimately fall.

Most of the big men come to grief in what might be considered a strange way. They blindly follow the advice of trainers and jockeys and in the long run discover that success can only be sustained by the man possessing a strong independent judgment. John Hammond, who together with Fred Swindells and

Charles Hannam, stands out among the great backers of all time, infinitely preferred his own opinion of a horse to that of the trainer or the owner. But neither man could be called a plunger in the accepted sense of the word. When Hammond bet heavily he usually knew what he was doing.

All manner of fates may overtake the apparent certainties of the Turf. Year after year we see it, especially at meetings like Ascot, where the odds-on chances come down with a sickening crash leaving even the unfortunate trainer utterly bewildered as to how it happened. I still retain bitter memories of one of the blackest Ascots I ever knew when I lost £9500 in two races, laying the odds on what looked to be money for nothing.

What chance, then, has the outside public got of winning in the long run? There is no more extraordinary feature of racing than the small number of men who have consistently made money backing horses. John Hammond laid the foundation of his great fortune when he backed his Derby winner St. Gatien and his mare Florence to win him an enormous sum of money on the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire double. I am speaking of 1884, in the days when you could back a horse to win a quarter of a million without having the fact screamed all over the country. Hammond won no less than £90,000 when St. Gatien duly won the Cesarewitch and another £75,000 when Florence completed a notable double in the Cambridgeshire.

I knew him in my early days on the Turf more than forty years ago when he was then a rich man and highly respected by all the people with whom he came in contact. John, like most of the big professional backers in England, was self-made with no great education except the little he had acquired on the racecourse and in the company of men of the world. But nevertheless he remained the bluff, good-natured fellow, always ready to assist a friend in distress and

keenly alive to everything appertaining to a good horse.

And yet John had begun life in the establishment presided over by the ultra-clever Captain Machell and from that humble beginning had blossomed out into a backer of horses, where the knowledge acquired in his youthful days stood him in profitable stead. Moreover, unlike most gamblers, he remained a prudent, careful man to the end of his days, and when he ultimately responded to that call which all of us must some time obey, he left behind him half a million pounds as an indication of what he had known about that perplexing creature, the racehorse.

The stories I could tell about John Hammond would fill a book. He made a fortune backing horses because he trusted his own judgment in preference to that of other people. Also, he quickly realized the peculiar virtue of a still tongue, and so, at a time when most of the backers were regretfully giving up the ghost, John had become a wealthy owner and besported himself among the best in the land. His horses were first trained by Robert Sherwood, senior, and subsequently by James Waugh, the father of the racing family now at Newmarket. In the ordinary course of events it would have been impossible for a man like John Hammond to have his horses trained in the stables of aristocratic Newmarket, but he possessed an irreproachable reputation and was on such good terms with the Stewards of the Jockey Club that nobody could breathe a word against him.

It came about, therefore, that John's horses were trained at Newmarket by James Waugh in the same stable as those of Lord Cadogan and Lord Gerard, who in the days when this was happening were amongst the most prominent sportsmen in the land. These two gentlemen were to be numbered among the old-fashioned plungers who are now almost a forgotten race. They did not mind Hammond's horses being in the same stable, but perhaps the irony

of it bit into their soul one day during a race week when they were having a look round the stable in company with Sir Frederick Johnstone, and ruefully came to the conclusion that the only good animals to be seen belonged to John Hammond.

"Just fancy," remarked Lord Gerard to his companions, "it's only a few years ago this fellow used to be employed by Machell and now he owns the best horses in the stable."

But even the redoubtable John occasionally made a sad blunder. Well do I recollect his instructing a friend to back his horse Laureate II for the Royal Hunt Cup of 1891.

"It doesn't matter how much you put on," said John. "Just let me know on Monday."

The commissioner duly obeyed his instructions and took £20,000 to £1000. But when he reported what he had done John felt dissatisfied with the price and exercised a woman's privilege to change his mind.

"You had better keep it," he said, "I don't want it."

Such things are not uncommon in racing, but no one would expect them to happen with John Hammond. However, he refused to take over the wager and the angry agent had to make the best of a bad job. What Hammond said when Laureate II won the Hunt Cup I need not mention here. He never forgot the incident to his dying day; neither did the man who benefited by it!

Despite these little ups and downs, Hammond continued on the way to prosperity and like a wise man, invested his money. During Newmarket races I frequently dined with him at his famous house, "The Lawns," where he used to give convivial parties to his intimate friends. One could gather that John was held in high esteem by all the best people; it was no uncommon sight to see half a dozen peers of the realm seated around his dinner table treating him as one of themselves.

And yet the time came when even the infallible John began to lose his luck. Occasionally I would ask him how he had fared during the week's racing at Newmarket.

"Winners!" he used to say. "Why, I never back a winner now. I worked for years and years and never lost. Now I never win. I can't tell you how much money I have lost the last few years."

He said to me one day that if he had to get money by backing horses then he would never be able to do it. He thought his luck had gone for good, and I think he was right. The fickle goddess of chance frequently takes it into her flighty head to throw off the people she has favoured in years gone by. There is no apparent reason; it just happens, and the man—or the woman—who has hitherto been the darling of the gods discovers to his or her dismay that nothing will go right.

I don't think a man loses his judgment. That usually becomes ripened as the years pass on, but in racing there is no doubt whatever that the good luck enjoyed by some people eventually deserts them and leaves them high and dry in the shadow of an impoverished old age unless they have had the wisdom to put something by against the turn of the tide.

Racing is a chanceable game. You may go on winning for some time by having a better knowledge of horses than others, which was the case with John Hammond. When he made money he invested it, and from thence onwards he would only bet in the ordinary way. Often when I met him in the paddock he would ask me straight out whether a horse I was running was worth backing. If I told him yes he would have £100 or £200 on it. But in dealing with his own animals he had a method all his own, and you could follow him around the Ring without having the faintest indication of his intentions.

"Is so-and-so fit?" he would ask his trainer.

"No, he can't win."

Anyway," John would say, "run him in this race."

A friend would go up to Hammond and ask him if he fancied his horse and if it would be worth backing.

"Yes," John would reply, "put me a 'monkey' (£500) on it."

Another friend would come up with the same question and John would have another "monkey." Naturally the news spread and in a very short space of time the horse was a raging hot favourite. But on such occasions his animals never won. All the professional backers would be on and, to their dismay, the horse would be well down the course.

Three or four weeks afterwards the animal would run again with all the knowledgeable ones leaving it out of their calculations. At the price he liked, John would back his horse to win £20,000. Also, if called before the Stewards for an explanation of the previous running, he would tell them point-blank that he knew nothing about the matter.

"You must ask my jockey," he would say.

Asked if he had backed the horse when it had run unplaced, he would produce his betting book to prove that he had had £1000 on it. So in the face of that evidence what could the Stewards do? John never believed in volunteering information. He relied entirely on his own judgment. The intelligence he received at Newmarket he sifted according to its value and used at the proper time. One requires to be a rare judge of a horse, as well as the possessor of an iron resolution, to make money in the way Hammond did. The combination is not often found and that is probably why so few professional backers ever succeed in keeping any money.

Hammond was highly pleased that his Derby winner, St. Gatien, had sired Meddler. I met him in the High Street, Newmarket, one day when he said to me :

"I hear you have got a good two-year-old by my horse."

"Yes," I replied, "it is a very nice colt. Come and have a look at it."

Good horse though he had been on the Turf, St. Gatien had proved a failure at the stud. The best mares in England had been sent to him, but hitherto all his progeny had been practically worthless. But "Abington" Baird sent his Oaks winner, Busybody, to St. Gatien with the result that she bred Meddler. All Newmarket knew about the colt and the first time he ran, in the British Dominion Stakes at Sandown Park, he started at 4 to 1 on. I have never known such a thing before or since. However, Baird died the following year and Meddler never had the chance he ought to have had of winning the Classics.

One of the most sensational plungers that ever came my way was a man who called himself George Wales. He flourished in the early eighties during the time that Fred Archer was in his prime and riding over two hundred winners every year. Where he came from and where he went when ultimately Archer died I never heard. He certainly ran into a fortune backing Archer's mounts and plunging to an extent which would give the bookmakers of to-day electric shocks. He used to follow Archer all round the country. Nearly every owner in England wanted Fred when they had something to bet on, and Wales, with sublime faith, would step in and back Archer's mounts for thousands of pounds.

He was not a bad judge. Nearly all the horses that Fred rode were "sitters," besides which Wales knew perfectly well that Archer made it a practice to go to an owner when he had seen a horse that ought to have won and had not, mostly through indifferent jockeyship.

“Let me ride this for you next time,” he would say, “I’m sure I can win on it.”

And he did. Backing jockeys’ mounts has been tried times innumerable by the betting fraternity, almost invariably with disastrous results, but for six or seven years Fred Archer could do no wrong, with the result that Wales piled up a fortune that should have lasted him until the end of his days. If Archer won on a horse at a good price Wales would usually be the man to benefit most. I have known him have as much as £5000 on one of Archer’s mounts, but like a good many more plungers he did not know when to stop. In the end all his money went and the Turf saw no more of him.

The next big gambler to come along was an American named Theodore F. Walton. He came over from the States in the early nineties to teach us how money should be made on the racecourse and began operations by touting trainers and jockeys. He would back their horses for them and for a time at least met with considerable success. However, in the long run the law of averages beat him and he also vanished.

About the middle nineties racing was enlivened by the presence of a young gentleman who called himself Ernest Benzon and was more commonly known to fame as the “Jubilee Juggins.” I think he got this nickname from the fact that he first began to make a noise in the world about the time of Queen Victoria’s Jubilee in 1897.

Originally, I believe, his father had sent him to Australia to see if he could acquire a little sense, but judging from what I saw when he returned to England the experiment had been none too successful. He came into a fortune of £250,000 and inside of two years this had all gone. It was nothing to him to have £5000 on a horse, and the way his friends used to pick losers for him was nothing short of marvellous. He had a few horses in training, most of them utterly worthless. Verily, the wolves of the Turf came down

upon him, and in the minimum space of time left him a shorn lamb. And yet he belonged to a race not commonly given to parting with their money. He was a Jew, olive-complexioned, tall, and stooping, completely obsessed with the idea that he knew all there was to know about racing. On one occasion he went to York races with a big betting man named Tom Wilson and another individual named Seaton. They put up at the Station Hotel, and on coming back on the last day of the races discovered they had half an hour to kill before the train went. The "Jubilee Juggins," always of a restless nature, suggested a game of cards while they were waiting. So the three of them played *chemin de fer* for twenty minutes, and when it was over Benzon was £10,000 the poorer.

When things were prosperous with him he lived at a place called Binfield Grove. Ultimately, of course, all his property had to go to satisfy his clamouring creditors and I lost sight of him until 1903. His family had saved a little money for him out of the wreckage and gave him an allowance which he could not mortgage. While staying at Skindles Hotel, Maidenhead, in the year mentioned, who should I come across but my old friend the "Jubilee Juggins"! He could not afford to stay at such an expensive establishment, but he lived in a little cottage in the neighbourhood and used to come into Skindles to meet the sporting friends of his prosperous days. They would get him to play billiards for a pound or two and chaff him about his exploits on the Turf, but he took it all in good part and showed that even if he had been a fool he could be a good loser.

I have known many strange characters who have come to us from America imagining that they could show us how to gamble. None of them succeeded in staying the course, any more than did the numerous American trainers and jockeys who have tried their luck here and eventually come to the conclusion that the Old Country is not quite so slow as some people



BRACKBERRY, 3-3, 1-4. OLD FISH CREEK, BOULDER CO., JULY 1941. SHAM CORNER, DERBY, 1941

think. I am not saying that the Americans have not taught us something. When Tod Sloan arrived in England he found most of our jockeys fast asleep and for a time at least his success was sensational. Danny Maher was practically the last of the American invasion, but to all intents and purposes he had become thoroughly anglicized and never attempted to win his races in the pillar-to-post fashion introduced by Sloan.

None of the American betting men were particularly sound in their methods. I entertain clear recollection of a picturesque individual known as Riley Grannan. He came over here in the nineties with the intention of breaking all the bookmakers in the country, instead of which the boot was very much on the other foot. He had thousands of pounds to bet with, but he was sufficiently shrewd to realize before long that he had no chance. He said he had come to England because he could not bet enough money in America, but his little bluff was soon called here.

Grannan soon went under. He lasted a year or two and then, as they say in the vernacular, "took the knock," owing the Ring thousands of pounds. They called him a big bettor, but compared with Charlie Hannam he was nothing. Even Grannan himself admitted that.

"Gee!" he remarked to me at Newmarket one day, "Hannam bets more in a week than I would bet in a whole year."

Which was—and is still—perfectly true. Hannam is the greatest and most successful backer of horses I have ever seen.

Tom Wilson, whose name is still well-remembered among the racing folk, could also bet when the opportunity came his way. He won £40,000 when La Fleche pulled off the Cambridgeshire in 1892. If I had been possessed of the necessary courage I might have done the same myself. I was then at Bedford Lodge, Newmarket, and temporarily had charge of

this famous mare. Lord Marcus Beresford asked Wilson to back La Fleche for him, and Tom, being a man who could always follow a good lead, not only backed La Fleche for his lordship, but also for himself. He took 4 to 1 to something like £10,000.

“What do you think about it?” he asked me.

I did not know what to think. I did not train La Fleche. She was only in my stable from one Newmarket meeting to the other, and although I knew her to be easily the champion of the year, I thought £10,000 a lot of money. Anyhow, she duly won, and if only for Tom's sake I was delighted that his plucky gamble had come off. He owned a shoot not far from Mildenhall and while over there shortly after the Cambridgeshire I found him going over his account.

“I've won £42,000,” he said to me. “That's not bad, is it?”

But even with such a spectacular win as this poor old Tom could see the time coming when he would go under. Occasionally, after a bad day, when he had probably lost something like £10,000 or £15,000, he would turn to me with a bitter smile and remark that it would not be long before he “took the knock.” I did not believe him, but then I did not know how wildly he used to gamble and the thousands of pounds he literally threw away backing three or four horses in a race.

“I shall soon be finished,” he used to say to me. “So will Charlie Hannam. We can't go on winning.”

These heavy gamblers have a strange philosophy all their own. The time comes when they grow frightened of their luck and that is when their nerve fails them and they lose their courage. Everything goes wrong for them and it follows as a matter of course that the end soon comes.

Tom often remarked to me that he felt like a child alongside Hannam when it came to betting—and he was right. They used to bet together; Tom would fancy one horse and Charlie another. They would

not only back them individually, but also bet with each other to the tune of thousands of pounds. Hannam was always the better judge. He has won in one afternoon what most people would consider a handsome fortune. Equally, he has lost almost as heavily, but in the main he has gone on winning and proved himself to be the most successful gambler the Turf has ever known. In all my sixty years I have never come across a man like him. He will bet thousands where anybody else would be afraid to venture more than a hundred.

The end that he had often predicted for himself came for Tom Wilson in 1898 in that disastrous Derby when Jeddah won for Mr. J. W. Larnach. I had known for some time past that he was going badly, and on Oaks day, after Airs and Graces had won the race, he turned to me and said quietly :

“This is the finish of me. I won't be able to settle.”

I could not believe him. I knew, of course, as did almost everyone else on the Turf, that he had lost over £150,000 in a year and had paid out like the gallant sportsman he was. And he had done it without a murmur. Only when he had come to the end of everything did he turn to me and say quietly, without a trace of the emotion any man might be unashamed to feel, that he would have to default.

Every racing man knows what that means. When people cannot settle they are automatically reported to the Committee of Tattersall's and warned off. I knew only too well that Tom had had a terrible Derby week. He had lost about £30,000 after a vain attempt to “get out” on Nun Nicer in the Oaks and when she had been beaten he also was finished.

I expostulated with him.

“What's the good of talking like that?” I said. “They will give you plenty of time to settle.”

“Don't talk nonsense,” replied Tom. “There's a bottom to every well and I have reached it.”

Only a few people in the Ring at Epsom that day seemed to know that Tom would not be able to pay. The plain fact of the matter was that his luck had utterly deserted him. His numerous bookmaker friends would have been only too glad to see him back a good winner, but Tom's fortune had gone for good. There are times when it does not pay the Ring to be owed too much money. Rather do the layers prefer that the pendulum shall take a swing the other way in favour of the backers so that there is a reasonable prospect of getting at least some of their money. It is a state of affairs equally applicable to both backer and bookmaker. If either one or the other wins too much then someone is bound to default.

Tom Corns, the Chairman of Tattersall's, did not know what was going on this fateful Oaks day. He came up into the box in the grand stand where Wilson and I were talking and seemed astounded when Wilson told him point-blank that he had come to the end of his tether.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed.

"It means just what I say," replied Wilson. "I have lost all the money I have except a small sum which I am going to keep for my wife and family. I am not going to see them starve," he added emphatically.

Corns was too amazed to believe the news. But when finally it dawned upon him that it was no joke, he said to Wilson :

"You have still got time to get out. Back so-and-so," naming a particular horse, "for the next race. It's certain to win."

"I tell you I'm finished," said Wilson. "I won't have another bet."

I added my persuasion, but he would not listen to me. Strangely enough, the horse won, but Tom had not got a penny on it, and when the Monday settling came his account was missing. He never went on a racecourse again, but I occasionally saw him in town

and played cards with him. All the money he had made went back to the Ring.

That is where Charlie Hannam stands head and shoulders above all the plucky gamblers I have known. To-day he is the one man in a hundred million who has made a fortune backing horses and kept it. I think the secret of his success is his iron resolution; you cannot make him deviate an inch from his own opinion. I remember him playing pyramids at Monte Carlo some years ago—he has always been a good player, especially when there is money at stake—with a friend better than himself. There were bets all round the room, everybody fancying that Hannam was sure to be beaten. The two men went on playing and Hannam was losing £3000.

“Now,” he said, “I’ll play you double or quits.”

Well, it looked a good thing. Everybody agreed and the game started. Hannam’s opponent potted the first six balls and it seemed to be a hundred to one against “Old England.” But he won, without turning a hair, proof positive of the fact that his nerves are like steel. I don’t know another man in the world who could have done it. I have seen all the billiard champions of England get beaten at the Victoria Club in a heavy betting game by some of the worst players who have ever held a cue. Neither they, nor anyone else, can stand the strain of a smoke-laden room when bets are being bandied pell-mell across the table and hundreds of pounds are betted on every stroke. Charlie Hannam is the single exception. Nothing excites him, nothing worries him. He will wager £1000 on making a losing hazard as unemotionally as he will have £5000 on a horse.

I think he will be the last of the great plungers. Year by year the tendency is for gambling to become smaller. Also, there is not the same money about, nor does one come across the type of man with the courage to have a fortune on a horse. There also remains the undeniable fact that the Ring is not what

it was. Very few of the present-day bookmakers will bet like their predecessors. Joseph Pickersgill, one of the Leviathans of the Ring, would lay the odds to almost any money, but curiously enough he would never bet with Hannam. All things considered, he was not a bad judge.

CHAPTER IV

MEMORIES of days gone by come crowding thick and fast when I think of "The Squire," whom I might aptly describe as the Last of the Gay Corinthians. When "Abington" Baird died in 1893 we just about saw the last of the dashing young bloods who were going out of fashion towards the eighties.

The Turf possesses none of them to-day. Most of the rich youngsters who inherit big fortunes have been prudently brought up and educated in that school of caution which emphatically disclaims the pleasures and profits of a Bohemian life. No longer are the promenades of the Empire and the Alhambra thronged with gilded youth in search of amatory adventure; gone also the exciting days I remember so well when the Prize Ring robustly bloomed in furtherance of the manly art.

The Turf of the twentieth century, though still clad in its covering of green, no longer attracts the scions of our wealthy noble houses. Perhaps it is that money no longer circulates as freely as it did; whatever surplus remains must go, not to the son and heir, but to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

When he and I joined forces he had already undergone many vicissitudes on the Turf, but as the money continued to pour forth his innumerable friends still contrived to keep him interested. He rented at Newmarket a breeding stud belonging to the famous Captain Machell, a gentleman who used to be somewhat notorious for the multiplicity and manner of his coups. But although the gallant Captain readily

accepted all the money he could get from Baird, it did not seem to make him particularly friendly. Every time I won a race with a plater belonging to "The Squire," Machell, probably with the idea that anything coming from Bedford Lodge must be good, would almost invariably oppose us at the auction and go to any ridiculous price to buy the horse.

The very first winner I turned out for Baird was a two-year-old called Athlete. I did not think much of the animal and at the subsequent auction let it go to Captain Machell. When I saw "The Squire" a day or two afterwards, he said to me :

"You let that horse go and Machell bought it."

"That's so," I replied. "He bid as much as it was worth and more."

"I would not let him get anything of ours in the future," said "The Squire," rather nettled. "If you run anything, buy it back. I don't care what it costs."

I soon discovered that every time we put a horse in a selling race to bet on Machell always opposed us very strongly, so much so that even I began to grow a little annoyed. There is an unwritten law in these matters. If you make an owner pay a big price to get his horse back you can't very well complain if he plays the same game on you when the chance comes along. "Live and let live" applies to everybody, especially on the Turf.

Anyhow, Captain Machell continued to run us up every time we won a selling race, until I showed him that he wasn't quite so clever as he thought. One day at Newmarket I ran a colt called Scotch Earl and had a bit of a plunge on it. Baird himself did not happen to be present ; he had no particular interest in racing except when he was riding. Meetings like Ascot, Goodwood, and Newmarket, where they don't cater for amateur riders, he despised to the bottom of his soul. On this occasion I put £3000 on Scotch Earl and the horse soon became a raging hot favourite.

I had to take a short price to most of my money, but the horse won all right and Captain Machell doubtless congratulated himself on having the prospect of buying another ready-made winner.

The auctioneer soon raised the bids to a thousand guineas, and although I knew it was twice as much as the animal was worth I hung on, having "The Squire's" instructions in mind, until Scotch Earl had reached 1300 guineas. Then I let Machell have the horse. His trainer, James Jewitt, was a warm friend of mine, and after the horse had changed hands I said to him :

"How is it that Machell always opposes us?"

"Don't ask me," he replied. "I can't tell you what his idea is. If I asked him he would probably tell me to mind my own business."

When I saw "The Squire" again he seemed very annoyed.

"You have let Machell have another horse of mine," he complained to me at Bedford Lodge. "What's the matter with him? We have always been such good friends and I spend a fortune keeping up his place. I'll tell you what to do," continued Baird. "For the future, whenever he runs a plater, buy it if it wins and claim it if it loses."

However, I think the redoubtable Machell began to realize that he wasn't quite so clever as he imagined. Three or four days after he had bought Scotch Earl I saw his trainer on The Limekilns at Newmarket :

"That colt wasn't worth the money," he remarked, more in sorrow than in anger.

"What did you expect?" I replied. "He's a good-looking horse."

"Yes, but he makes a noise" said Jewitt.

"Well, whose fault is that?" I said. "I didn't ask Machell to buy him. I got into quite enough trouble with 'The Squire' without bothering about Machell."

Only on one other occasion did Captain Machell

try his luck with us. Baird happened to be at Goodwood one year, although as a rule he would let his horses run without caring to be present. However, on this occasion he took a house in the neighbourhood. Walking round the paddock with me, he said :

“ I don't care for these meetings. They don't interest me at all. I suppose you haven't got anything on which we can have a bet ? ”

“ The Squire ” might have the best animal in England waiting to run, but for sheer excitement he liked nothing more than the thrill of having £5000 on a horse in a tinpot selling race.

“ Yes, I have got something good for you, ” said I in reply to his question.

I happened to have a sister to Juggler, a famous sprinter of those days. Unfortunately, she had only one eye ; the other had been knocked out by a clumsy stable boy. At all events, she was a very nice filly and able to run.

“ If you like to chance her in a selling race, ” I said, “ there's no doubt about her winning. ”

“ All right, ” said “ The Squire, ” “ run her. ”

“ You will have to have a good bet on her, ” I told him.

Money being the last consideration in the world, “ The Squire ” decided to have £4000 on the horse. Just as we were discussing the matter John Hammond happened to walk by. Baird called to him and said :

“ Hammond, put me £4000 on my filly for this race. Do you want anything on ? ” he asked me.

“ I'll have a thousand, ” I said.

So Hammond went off to put £5000 on our one-eyed filly and, as I need hardly explain, it caused a bit of a stir in the ring even at Goodwood. By the time he had finished Hammond had skinned the market clean out. The bookmakers were asking for 3 to 1 when the horses were at the post.

Needless to say, our gamble duly materialized, and

after the filly had weighed in, Harry Esman, the owner of the second and a very decent fellow, came up to me and said :

“What about this animal? Of course, you are going to get it back?”

I instructed him to buy it in for me, thinking to save a little money thereby. No sooner had we got under the auctioneer's rostrum than Machell appeared on the scene. He opened the bidding with 500 guineas, a sensational beginning for any selling race.

“I'll give him something to go on with,” I said to myself.

“Make it a thousand,” I whispered to Esman.

Machell looked so astounded when he heard his bid doubled that he straight away shut up like a concertina. He looked over, saw me alongside Esman, and then walked away. That was the last time he ever tried any of his tricks with my horses. As a matter of fact, he never ran another plater of his own. I think his trainer informed him that if he did I would surely claim it.

Going away from the plating business I would like to relate quite an interesting little incident which occurred about this time. Jewitt and I were very friendly. If he had anything good he told me about it and I reciprocated. At the Second Spring Meeting at Newmarket I happened to run across him in the Birdcage, when he said to me :

“I've got a winner to-day and as far as I know it will be a good price. Nobody knows anything about it. Put me £50 on and have a good bet yourself. I want to run the colt to open his eyes, and if I am not greatly mistaken, he won't be beaten all the year.”

Primed with this comforting information, I went into the Ring firmly resolved to have a plunge. But first I backed the horse for Jewitt. Greenall, a good bookmaker, who owned brood mares and ran horses of his own, laid me 8 to 1 to £50 for the horse's trainer. I walked on to the next man to see what I could get

for myself, when suddenly it dawned upon the bookmaker that there was a commission out. He ran after me crying that he had laid me over the price. I am always sorry for bookmakers: the poor fellows invariably lay you over the odds—in their dreams.

“ You’ve laid me eights and you will have to stick to it,” I told him.

I had something like a “ monkey ” of my own on the colt and it duly obliged me by winning in a common canter at the very nice starting-price of 5 to 1. It was a Maiden Plate and the name of the winner was that of a horse who afterwards made Turf history. Isinglass was the animal, and if I had known on that day what I knew afterwards I would have had £10,000 on. However, it is in such modest company as this that many great horses open their careers on the Turf. They are usually put into an easy race to teach them the business, and the mighty Isinglass, who with Ormonde, St. Simon, and Minting, took rank with the equine heroes of that generation, had to begin somewhere.

“ The Squire’s ” greatest ambition in life was to ride a winner, and I must confess that he was easily the finest amateur jockey in England. Without quite touching the best professional form, he could ride a horse better, I think, than any amateur I have ever seen. He always aspired to be a second Archer but, of course, such uncanny skill as “ The Tinman ” possessed could not be emulated, however much money Baird would give. And I verily believe that anyone who could have made him a jockey like Fred Archer would have got all the money Baird had. He would travel hundreds of miles and spend thousands of pounds merely for the honour and glory of getting first past the post. And, by jove, didn’t he love beating one of the crack professionals !

I had a horse of his at Bedford Lodge named Juggler, then one of the best sprinters in the country. Over five or six furlongs he was much the same horse

as that champion flyer Sundridge whom I afterwards trained for Mr. J. B. Joel.

“ I should like to ride a winner at Epsom,” remarked “ The Squire ” one day. “ I have never had any luck there. Do you think we’ve got anything on which I could win? Have you got a horse that could win a race of any sort ? ”

Fortunately or otherwise, I happened to have Juggler at Epsom that year. There was a handicap that closed overnight for which you could enter the horses the day before. The particular race I had in mind closed on the Monday night, the weights for it coming out on the Tuesday. Obviously, something had to be done and it flashed across my mind that I would have to enlist the sympathy and aid of my dear old friend, Mr. H. M. Dorling, who ran the Epsom meeting for more years than I can remember.

“ There’s Juggler,” I said to “ The Squire.” “ I could put him into the race, but he is certain to get a big weight. They are only a moderate lot in these races that close overnight.”

“ It doesn’t matter about that,” said Baird impatiently. “ Do you think I can ride him ? ”

“ Yes, you can ride him all right,” I replied, “ but whether you’ll win on him is another thing.”

Just about that time Juggler was at the top of his form and I could not see any handicapper letting him win a race. At all events, I wanted to please “ The Squire ” and made up my mind to see what a little influence could do. Mr. Dorling and I were great friends, and when I saw him at Epsom I said to him :

“ Now, Mr. Dorling, I’ve got a horse here and “ The Squire ” is very anxious to ride it. You know what a supporter of your meeting he is and he is very keen to ride a winner here. I’ve put Juggler in the overnight handicap and I want you to do me a good turn and give him the best chance you can.”

Mr. Dorling, a good sport if ever there was one, laughed loud and long.

"Well," he said at last. "a horse like Juggler in a race of this sort is a stiff proposition. However, leave it to me and I'll do what I can for you."

When the weights for the handicap came out, everybody exclaimed that Juggler had been literally presented with the race. He was certainly set to carry ten stone, but he had nothing to beat, and when all the racing folk saw the handicap they all said :

"This is a nice how-do-you-do. Nobody will run against Juggler."

When I went on the course I met Mr. Dorling who naturally asked me what I thought of the handicap.

"You've done splendidly," I said. "I don't think there is any doubt about the horse winning."

As a matter of fact, five or six runners turned out—thanks to the use of a little more influence. When Baird got up on the horse he asked me how he should ride him.

"How you like," I replied. "He is sure to win, no matter how you ride."

"Have you backed him?" asked "The Squire."

"I've got a thousand on him," I said, thinking it money for nothing.

They backed Juggler down to 11 to 8 on and I fully expected him to come in alone.

They say there is a guardian angel up above looking after racing handicappers' mistakes. It must have been so on this particular day, because Juggler not only did not win, he was never seen in the race, to the consternation not only of myself but dozens of professional backers. When Baird got back to the paddock I asked him what had happened.

"Nothing," he replied, "he would not go at all. Don't let him run any more."

Used as I was to "The Squire's" little eccentricities, it rather appalled me to think of allowing such a good horse to retire when there were dozens of good races that he could win. I demurred as strongly as I could

but Baird, as obstinate as a mule when he had made up his mind, would not listen to reason.

"Maybe he can win plenty of races," he said, going off to change, "but I don't want him to run again. If I can't win on him no one else will. Send him to the stud."

So that was the premature end of Juggler's racing career. He never did much good as a sire, but he was certainly one of the best sprinters I have ever known. Everybody at Epsom that day declared that Baird was not trying on him, but I think "The Squire" would have given £50,000 to have won. What actually happened I could never discover. The horse was never better in his life, and he could have given three stone to anything in the race.

However, upsets such as these were of almost everyday occurrence in the somewhat trying life I had with Baird. He once bought a horse from somebody in Ireland for 1500 guineas, a useful animal certain in the ordinary course of events to win races. I had only had him a few weeks when Baird came down to Newmarket to ride him in a gallop.

"I don't think much of that horse," he remarked afterwards. "I'll make you a present of him on condition that you let me ride him when he runs."

Who wouldn't have a good horse on such generous terms? I thanked "The Squire," promptly entered the animal in a selling race at Manchester, and backed him to win me a lot of money. Baird also had a bit of a plunge. He instructed me to put £1000 on for him, while I had £500.

Now Baird, as I have mentioned previously, had horses in training at half the stables in England, and most of them ran in other people's names. Among the people who had some of his horses was a very shrewd gentleman I will call "Tom Tuppin," who trained in Yorkshire. In addition to being employed by "The Squire" he also owed him thousands of pounds. In the particular race I am referring to our

horse lost and afterwards, to my intense surprise, it was claimed for £300 by no less a person than "Tuppin." I saw Baird and imparted the somewhat staggering news that we had lost not only the race and our good money, but also the horse.

"That will be all right," replied "The Squire" confidently. "Go and tell 'Tuppin' I want it back."

But friend Tuppin, not amenable to reason, uncompromisingly refused to accede to the request. Nor could persuasion of the most violent description induce him to change his mind. Baird threatened him with all manner of pains and penalties if he did not hand the animal over, but "Tuppin" knew what I knew, that if he liked to open his mouth about "The Squire" running horses in other people's names, then someone would be promptly warned off, and as "The Squire" had a pretty fair idea that he would be the person most intimately concerned, he consoled me with the promise that he would make me the present of another horse in the near future.

With all his skill in the saddle Baird never succeeded in riding the winner of a big race. And yet his heart and soul were in the game, or at any rate until such time as his innumerable undesirable hangers-on gradually got the better of him and dragged him down to their own degraded depths. Still, the ruling passion of his life was to find a horse on which he could win a race. On one noteworthy occasion at Manchester he mentioned to me that an animal named Hungarian was, in his opinion, a good thing for one of the selling races. Did I think I could get him the ride?

"It might be done," I said, and promptly went off to interview the trainer of the animal, one Humphreys of Lambourn.

When I found that individual I acquainted him with the fact that Baird would like to ride Hungarian, to which he replied:

"Well, I don't know. I have engaged Fred Webb to ride him and I don't see how you can get him off."

"Oh," I replied, "that's easy enough. Fred knows 'The Squire'! He won't mind."

"All right," said Humphreys, going off, "if you can square Webb I don't mind. But I shall want him to put me £200 on it."

"I'll promise that," I said, glad to have fixed the matter up so quickly.

Then I had to see Fred Webb and arrange a *quid pro quo* in that direction. "The Squire" was highly delighted. He duly got up on Hungarian, won the race pulling up, but apparently forgot all about the money that he should have put on for the trainer. A week or ten days must have elapsed when I again met Humphreys on the course.

"Look here, Charlie," he exclaimed, "I haven't had that money from 'The Squire.' He ought to have sent me a cheque for it by now."

These sort of things were just minor troubles I used to get in connection with Baird's horses.

"All right," I said resignedly, "I'll speak to him about it."

When I ran into my respected employer I told him that Humphreys had asked me for his money.

"What money?" he enquired. "I don't remember owing him anything."

"Why, the £200 you put on Hungarian for him."

"Good Lord, I forgot all about it. However, tell Masterman (his settler) to give it to him."

So Baird had to pay Humphreys the starting price to £200. That cost £900 and there was another couple of hundred for Fred Webb, which partly accounted for a little incident which happened one day at Newmarket. Mr. Edmund Tattersall, the father of the present Mr. Somerville Tattersall, one of nature's gentlemen and a fine sportsman, came to me and said:

"I wish you would speak to 'The Squire.' I know he is not a business man, but there is a matter

of £7000 to £8000 on the books. You might see him and ask him to let us have a cheque."

When I saw "The Squire" and told him that Mr. Tattersall would be greatly obliged to receive some money, he informed me that he hadn't got any. However, I knew his little eccentricities, and when I told Mr. Tattersall that he would have to wait, he just laughed and remarked to me :

"Well, I suppose he knows his own business best. We shall have to wait until he chooses."

Baird's anxiety to win races often brought about the most amusing results. I recollect at Alexandra Park his having an animal which was about to be given a walk-over in one of the races. "The Squire" had contemplated riding his own horse and fully expected to win, and he felt so dismayed at not getting a successful mount that he sent me frantically searching the paddock for an owner who might be induced to furnish a little opposition. I got hold of Billy Brown, a well-remembered figure of days gone by, who succumbed to the temptation of £100 to run a horse he had in the race called Grand Composer.

The two animals duly weighed out to make a race of it. "The Squire" naturally expected to win easily and he certainly had not the faintest conception that having given Billy Brown a hundred perfectly good sovereigns for what was practically nothing, the genial William would have the impertinence to beat him. But that is what happened. Grand Composer won by something like ten lengths and "The Squire's" language when he returned to weigh in I shall remember to my dying day.

All might have gone well with Baird had he stuck to the Turf. But towards the end of my time with him he became associated with the prize fighting fraternity, just about the period when Peter Jackson, Frank Slavin, and a few other heavy-weights were

coming into their prime. It was in the early nineties that glove fighting first made its appearance, and "The Squire," having grown rather tired of racing, took to the new sport with a zest which speedily brought him into bad odour with all his old friends. He would never come to a meeting at all, and I usually received my instructions through one of his secretaries, or one of the innumerable hangers-on who batted on him. Instead of leading a comparatively healthy life riding horses, he took to spending his time in London with fighting men and their friends. Many people did their utmost to prevent him coming a cropper, but, alas, he would listen to none of them.

Apart from any fame he may have acquired on the Turf, he also succeeded in achieving quite an amount of notoriety through his companionship with one of the most famous beauties in the land, a lady whose histrionic ability made her well known throughout the world. Whether or not she cared for him is open to doubt ; perhaps his millions may have been the great attraction. But, nevertheless, Baird was desperately fond of her and followed her all over the country. When he died in 1893 leaving her absolutely nothing, she was terribly cut up. Perhaps she had expected to get the greater part of the two million pounds he left, instead of which "The Squire" gave the bulk of his money to his relatives, leaving it to his innumerable friends to console themselves with the thought that they had had a pretty good time at his expense.

Poor Baird was indeed a generous man to anybody who obtained his friendship. He forgave things that might very easily have resulted in the offenders appearing in a criminal court. Everybody, indeed, helped himself to his money. Well do I recollect a valet he had backing a horse he rode to the tune of some hundreds of pounds, money which "The Squire" had entrusted him to mind during the race. Fortunately for Baird, he saw his henchman going into the Ring and, having a fairly good idea of what

was afoot, concluded that the best thing to be done was to win the race. And I am not exaggerating when I say it took "The Squire" all his time to win. After the race, having won himself a thousand or two, the valet made open confession of having "borrowed" the money. What Baird said to him I need not describe. It was sufficiently pungent to turn the air blue for some time afterwards.

His little eccentricities must have cost him a fortune. He fell madly in love with a lady who wanted £100,000 settled on her. She got her money but shortly afterwards left him. Naturally, Baird felt a certain amount of annoyance. After vainly trying to get his money back, he pondered over divers ways and means to have his revenge.

Christmas time came, whereupon he took the opportunity to send the lady a present, accompanied by a note in which he said :

"Although you have treated me so badly, I am always thinking of you. I am sending you something which I hope will bring you luck."

But what the lady's feelings were when she opened the parcel and found it to contain a dead cat a more graphic pen than mine would be required to describe.

His successes on the Turf were altogether disproportionate to the vast sums he spent. He won the Derby of 1887 with Merry Hampton and the Oaks of 1884 with Busybody. But I doubt whether such victories ever stirred his imagination, and it is rather amusing to recall the unwillingness he displayed to lead Merry Hampton in after the colt had credited him with the greatest prize the Turf has to offer. As I have remarked before, "The Squire" was all for personal prowess. He would much sooner have beaten Fred Archer in a match than won the Triple Crown with a horse ridden by someone else. However, with all his faults he was indeed a good fellow and in common with nearly everybody else who knew him, I could only deplore his untimely end.

CHAPTER V

I MADE his acquaintance in the autumn of 1902, an unwieldy, lean, ragged-looking gelding with hairy heels. Anything more unlike a racehorse I have never clapped eyes on. Although it was only October, his coat had already begun to grow and I put him among my other horses, feeling more than a little dubious as to the wisdom of attempting to train such an unpromising animal.

But handsome is as handsome does—especially with racehorses. My equine ugly duckling turned out to be a champion. He did even more. He became a notable public character, so that whenever he appeared on a racecourse the people would clap and cheer him just out of pure affection for a game old warrior who would battle his life out to get his head first past the post.

Dean Swift was his name and, like his famous namesake, he succeeded in carving for himself a niche in that temple of fame to which we all aspire. Long, lean and hungry looking, he possessed an indomitable, bulldog courage that endeared him to everybody. One could not help loving him. Race after race he won against better horses than himself, until at times I marvelled at his unquenchable spirit. There are many horses that will refuse to struggle; the old Dean would never acknowledge defeat.

And what a likeable old fellow he was! Everybody looked upon him as one of the comic characters of the Turf. When I took him to a race meeting the crowd would gather round his box just to see him saddled. They all knew Dean Swift. He liked the adulation every bit as much as a popular actor, and now and

again, just to show his appreciation of the feeling towards him, he would rear up and playfully put his forelegs around somebody's neck. I suppose it must have been a fellow-feeling towards another of the most popular personalities of the racing world that induced him to play this same little trick on Lord Lonsdale. His lordship happened to be at Epsom one day watching the old horse, when to his intense astonishment Dean Swift jokingly planted his feet on Lord Lonsdale's shoulders. Everybody laughed, while Dean Swift, winking out of the corner of his eye, dutifully took his jockey aboard and went out to win the City and Suburban.

He and I used to perform a little ritual together. After I had saddled him and seen everything ready, I would give him a playful little tap on the quarters with my umbrella as a sort of reminder that he had something to do that day. He always looked for it and gave me a comical cock of his head to acknowledge the signal. No doubt he knew what I meant. If he had been able to talk he would certainly have said :

“ All right, I know what you want. I'll see what I can do for you.”

I have had thousands of horses through my hands, but never one for whom I have entertained such a great affection. No better-tempered animal ever lived, and at the time when most horses are finished with racing he was still battling on ready and willing to give of his best.

He won his first race at Kempton Park on the Saturday following the Derby meeting. That particular week the black jacket and scarlet cap had been well to the fore. Our Lassie had won the Oaks and the flying Sundridge had pulled off the Royal Stakes. Dean Swift himself seemed to know that his stable companions had been achieving a little notoriety, and although at first I had not intended running him on the Saturday, he was so full of spirit that I thought I might just as well let him have a race. People took

no heed of him on this occasion. A modest seller had been chosen for him and he cleaned up the opposition in a light-hearted manner as if to show that he, too, could also gallop a little. Incidentally, we backed him to win a nice little sum of money and, as nobody seemed to fancy the look of him, we bought him in very cheaply for something like 500 guineas. Then he won the Ditch Mile Nursery at Newmarket. However, I did not run him a great deal as a two-year-old, having by this time come to realize that he was capable of better things. Indeed, the form he showed me in the spring of 1904 was so promising that I ran him in the City and Suburban, a race to which he evidently took a great fancy, because subsequently he ran in it eight consecutive years, winning twice, being second twice, and third twice. If at any time the Epsom Executive feel inclined to re-name any of their races, they might very well pay old Dean Swift the compliment of naming a race after him.

In the City and Suburban of 1904, carrying 6 st. 7 lbs., he had the misfortune to run up against a very good horse in Robert Le Diable. However, he got second, and as it turned out he did not succeed in winning a race as a three-year-old. I ran him in the Jubilee Handicap at Kempton Park where, it is interesting to recall, he was ridden by Jack Jarvis, the present successful Newmarket trainer. Jack was a very little boy then. He rode Dean Swift at 6 st. 2 lbs., a feat he might find rather difficult these days.

The Dean did not win me a race as a four-year-old, though he was always there or thereabouts. Once more did he make his first appearance of the season in the City and Suburban, this time with Herbert Randall on his back. On this occasion he ran third to Pharisee and Ambition, and throughout the year he invariably showed good form without quite succeeding. In the Cambridgeshire he ran another third, and I could only put him by for the winter for better luck as the years went on.

He had just one trouble. Like many another good horse, he was just a bit slow off the mark, but almost invariably one would find him running on when the other horses were beaten. There were times innumerable when he seemed to be left altogether, and one can only regard it as a tribute to his undeniable courage that he should have battled away trying to retrieve what he had lost at the start. Early in the 1906 season, which had been very open, he seemed to be in great heart and, in fact, I came to the conclusion that he had just about reached his best. I got him ready early and tried him so thoroughly that he looked certain to win the Lincoln. But, alas, once more did misfortune intervene. That fatal habit of not being able to leave the gate smartly undoubtedly lost him the race. He must have been left a dozen lengths or more, and with my glasses glued upon him I could see that it was almost impossible for him to get through. The Lincoln, of course, is always run at a break-neck pace from the very beginning, and with Dean Swift practically tailed off, I gave it up as a hopeless job. Suddenly, to my unbounded astonishment, he began to come through the field like a steam-engine. He must have been travelling twice as fast as anything else in the race and fifty yards from the post, with his head in front, he looked certain to win. Just when it looked a million to one on him the French horse Ob came thundering down and beat him a head. I know there were thousands of people on the course that day who thought that Dean Swift had won or, at any rate, had made a dead-heat of it. But I did not cavil at the judge's decision. I have seen too many of these close finishes to dream of disputing the decision of the only person who can tell what has won—the man in the box. We had backed him to win a fortune and fortunately had saved the money for a place, though I must confess I was bitterly disappointed. I had tried him to be next door to a certainty, only to find his slowness at the start a fatal handicap.

However, our cup of sorrow did not altogether overflow. Once more I had him in the City and Suburban, practically a winner of the Lincoln Handicap without a penalty. To be quite accurate, I fancied him more for the Epsom race than for the other, because the start of the City and Suburban is uphill, where a slow beginning is not so detrimental as it is at Lincoln. But, strange to say, Herbert Randall, who rode the horse and ought to have known more about him than anybody else, did not in the least fancy him to win at Epsom where he would have more opportunity of getting on his legs. Further, the horse liked the Epsom course. Nothing suited him better than to battle his way up that difficult half-mile and then down Tattenham Corner up the straight. He seemed to know that he could do better there than on the easier courses where a sprinter would be able to run him off his legs in the earlier part of the race.

Anyhow, both Dean Swift and I had all the confidence in the world about winning the City and Suburban of 1906, a feeling which Herbert Randall did not seem to share. He had even gone to the length of asking Mr. Joel to get someone else to ride the horse. I saw him in the weighing-room shortly before the race, looking very disconsolate, which prompted me to ask him the cause of the trouble.

"I'm all right," he said, "but I don't quite understand why everybody seems to think Dean Swift is such a good thing for this race. I don't think he is on the map."

"What are you talking about?" I replied. "You know he ought to have won the Lincoln by many lengths, and he is sure to win to-day."

Herbert, always a bit of a pessimist, said he hoped I was right, although he did not think so.

"Well," I thought to myself, "this is a nice thing." I went outside the weighing-room and met his father,

Sir Henry Randall, who naturally asked me if I thought Dean Swift would win.

"Yes, I do," I said. "I think so, but Bert doesn't. It is not a very nice position."

"Oh," replied Sir Henry, shaking his head, "Bert's a funny fellow, but I'll go and see what I can do with him."

Father and son must have had quite a heart-to-heart talk about the matter. Young Randall came out of the weighing-room still looking very gloomy and proceeded to get up on Dean Swift. The horse himself did not in the least share Randall's pessimism. He cantered down to the post in a light-hearted manner utterly indifferent to his burden, made his usual tardy beginning, and proceeded to demonstrate to his jockey the true state of affairs by having the race at his mercy something like half a mile from home. He literally won the race in a trot, and Bert Randall's face as he came in was a sight for the gods.

"You were right," he said to me as he got off the horse. "He never looked like losing it."

In many ways Bert Randall was an extraordinary fellow. He started to ride as an amateur, his father being a wealthy man and a well-known owner. However, after a time he found it advisable to turn professional, when he met with a good deal of success. He, like a good many other jockeys, became possessed of the idea that Dean Swift was a dead stayer, a fallacy which I thoroughly exposed by running him in the Doncaster Cup. Now, although Dean Swift would battle his life out, he could never get a yard beyond a mile and a half. As a matter of fact, a quarter of a mile less represented about his best distance, but all the jockeys who rode him, misled by the plucky way in which he struggled on toward the finish of a race, wrongly concluded that staying was his game. But I knew different. Having had the horse for so many years and galloped him hundreds of times, I knew exactly what he could do. He liked a course

with an uphill start like Epsom. That gave him a chance of getting on terms with his horses before the struggle began.

I recollect running a horse in a race at Liverpool when Bert Randall rode. I did not think very much of the animal and I said to Randall :

“ I am afraid this horse is not much good. Still, while he is here we might just as well run him.”

The horse ran and won. After the race Randall remarked to me :

“ This is your best two-year-old.”

“ Thank you,” I replied. “ I am much obliged to you. In my opinion he is one of the worst I have ever seen.” And to corroborate my view the animal never succeeded in winning another race.

Randall always contended that Dean Swift would win a long-distance race and, more to please him than anybody else, I ran the horse in the Doncaster Cup of 2 miles and a furlong. Mr. Joel was just a little curious to see if Randall's opinion of the horse would be borne out, but I knew he had not an earthly chance. In a way, the result was laughable. I told Walter Griggs, who rode the Dean on this occasion, to be sure and not make the running. However, the horse himself had something to say about this matter. Instead of waiting until the last second or two to make his effort, which was about the only prospect he had of winning, he started to make his own running, thinking, no doubt, that he had no further to go than his usual mile and a quarter. He seemed more than a little astonished to find himself going on and on and, as might be expected, the task proved a little too much for him.

He turned up as usual for the City and Suburban of 1907, but could only manage to get fifth. However, I pulled him out for the Epsom Summer Meeting, where he did his best to make the *amende honorable* by winning the Durdans Handicap with top weight. Also, we got the very nice price of 10 to 1 about him,

so that whatever happened he had earned his corn for the year. Going on to Ascot, he showed some of the juveniles what he could do by winning the Trial Stakes with top weight, making another appearance in the Royal Hunt Cup the day afterwards carrying the substantial impost of 9 st. 2 lbs. I hardly expected the old fellow to win. The Hunt Cup is a race something like the Lincoln. Only a tremendously fast horse who gets away well can have a chance. Still, he was so thoroughly fit that I thought I might just as well run him, but, alas, it proved but a vain hope. He won nothing more that year and once again took up his winter quarters with the expectation of paying his way in the world as time went on.

Now comes the 1908 season when the Dean had arrived at an age when most horses are put on the shelf. Unfortunately, we had no future in the paddocks for the old fellow, and as he seemed more than ever in love with the game Mr. Joel told me to keep him in training and win another City and Suburban with him. So, like the provincial actor, he made what is known in the theatrical profession as a welcome reappearance, and I am not exaggerating when I say that he was easily the outstanding attraction of the Epsom Spring Meeting of that year. You could hear the racing people saying to each other :

“ Well, I must go down to Epsom and see old Dean Swift. He’s sure to win the City and Suburban.”

This year the Dean had plenty to carry. The handicapper had given him 8 st. 12 lbs., but he did not mind in the least. Herbert Randall, now of a more optimistic frame of mind, provided the necessary jockeyship, although to be quite candid the Dean did not mind who rode him. He looked upon himself as the star turn, and quite rightly so. At the very remunerative price of 6½ to 1 he cantered in to win his second City and Suburban accompanied by the plaudits one only hears on a racecourse when a public favourite is going first past the post.

To show what a good horse Dean Swift was it is only necessary for me to mention that he ran in the Coronation Cup that year and made the champion stayer of that time, The White Knight, gallop for all he was worth to beat him. As a matter of fact, he would have won the race at a mile and a quarter, but the other one, then the best horse in England, ran him out of it at the finish. But it clearly revealed Dean Swift to be very little below Classic form. That year he went on to do great things and instead of deteriorating with age, as most horses do, he seemed to improve. Ascot Heath saw him again in June, where a neck intervened to prevent him winning the Trial Stakes for the second time. He also ran unplaced once more in the Royal Hunt Cup carrying top weight, 9 st. 5 lbs. Then he showed me one of the best performances of his life by winning the Liverpool Summer Cup of a mile and three furlongs with 9 st. 1 lb., giving weight to everything in the race. It was a curious—but by no means unprofitable—peculiarity of the old horse that he nearly always started at a good price. The bookmakers seemed to regard him as a light of other days and instead of Dean Swift they used to call him Been Swift. However, they paid for the privilege.

Much against my grain, I ran him in the Doncaster Cup, as previously mentioned, where he ran third to Radium and Glacis, incidentally having The White Knight behind him. He made his last appearance of the year in a match for the Select Stakes at Newmarket, which turned out to be one of the most sensational races of the year. A horse named Cocksure II, trained by Mr. Lambton, who had won many times that season, turned out to oppose the old Dean with 2 to 1 laid on him. What a thriller it was! Neck and neck they raced together all the way with the Dean resolutely refusing to be beaten. Locked together they flashed past the post, and I could have wept with joy when my horse's number went up in the frame.

That was the day Walter Griggs rode the best race of his career. He beat Danny Maher on Cocksure II when everybody expected it to be virtually a walk-over for the crack jockey.

Came the 1909 season with the old fellow still going strong. The years were beginning to tell on him a bit but the old fighting spirit still remained. Almost as a matter of course he went to Epsom to do his usual turn in the City and Suburban. In fact, I often thought he would have gone to Epsom by himself if I had not taken him. Top weight again, but this year he had the misfortune to bump up against a smashing good horse in White Eagle to whom he had to give 9 lbs. The weight just beat him. He ran second, beaten one and a half lengths, but it was not a very clean-run race, and both Mr. Joel and myself felt extremely dissatisfied. Later, at the Summer Meeting, we had another cut at White Eagle in the Coronation Cup where our horse conclusively showed himself to be the better. Prior to this I had run the Dean in the Jubilee where we had the bad luck to get another second. Had he been able to get away from the gate on equal terms he would have won the race as easily as he won the Coronation Cup. But, alas, the old failing continued to manifest itself and at Kempton, above all other courses, it is essential that a horse shall be in the fighting line as they come racing round the bend for home.

Once more to Ascot, once more second in the Trial Stakes. The old chap now had plenty of responsibility on his sturdy shoulders. In every race he ran he carried top weight, and although he never complained, I am sure he must have wondered in his heart of hearts why they did not make some allowance for old age. Sometimes I could see him looking at me as though he would like to have a talk about the matter. But nothing happened and we went to Liverpool together hoping to lift another Summer Cup. Top weight again, and a pretty hefty one at that. This

time a horse of Richard Wootton's, ridden by his son Frank, prevented our trip from being a success. Giving away nearly three stone, the Dean got beaten a paltry half-length by a useful horse called Adversary.

I smothered my disappointment as best I could and took him along with me to Goodwood where, in the Chesterfield Cup, another race he was very fond of, he topped the handicap and once more ran second. Then on another abortive errand in the Doncaster Cup, after which, to show his real quality, he made one of the three starters for the Champion Stakes at Newmarket in October. Bayardo, Dean Swift, and White Eagle were the three, and the Dean did one of the best things he ever did in his life when he gave Bayardo 6 lbs. and in a desperate finish ran him to a neck after having by no means the best of the luck. I often grieve to think that the old horse had not been given the opportunity of earning further fame as a sire. The indomitable courage he possessed would have been invaluable to our bloodstock. Anyhow, the Champion Stakes ended him for the year, but not altogether. Such a light-framed gelding as he was required but little training and he came out again in the spring of 1910 showing but few signs of wear and tear. Third this time (I need not mention the race) to two other very good horses in Bachelor's Double and Mustapha. I did not mind, because I knew that he never cut a race in his life. But no doubt the years were telling on him. I pulled him out for the Coronation Cup, when he could only run fifth.

And so to Ascot. By now people had come to look upon the Dean as a standing dish in the Trial Stakes. This time he found a real good one to beat, Whisk Broom, receiving 20 lbs. He could not do that and, as it turned out, he did not win us a race all the year. An irritating sequence of seconds and thirds, including a tilt at the Derby winner, Lemberg, in the Champion Stakes, and another go at Whisk Broom in the Select Stakes, clearly proved that our old horse was not

improving with age. But I would like to say this: there were dozens of smaller races we could have won with him, but Mr. Joel would not stoop to conquer. He loved his old horse, as did everybody else, and would not see him in the company of animals inferior to him in every conceivable form.

But the years had surely taken their toll when the Epsom Spring Meeting of 1911 came round. The Dean, now easily the veteran of the Turf, wanted no reminding about going down to the post for the City and Suburban, but, alas, he could not go the pace coming back. Unplaced this time, and I gave him a run in the Durdans Handicap at the Summer Meeting to see whether he would have any better luck there. I am afraid he must have been growing just a little tired of racing. On this occasion, he did something he had never done before—got left at the post altogether. I sympathized with him—who wouldn't? There is a time and a place for everything and I have no doubt he thought the time had arrived to leave such a strenuous business to horses younger than himself. However, he went with me to Ascot as usual and had his customary gallop in the Trial Stakes, only to find a smasher in the shape of the celebrated Hornet's Beauty.

Everybody used to ask me when I would give the old Dean a rest, and after talking the matter over with Mr. Joel we came to the conclusion that he should have just one more race and then go into the retirement of an honourable old age. So the Dean made positively his last appearance in another favourite race of his, the Chesterfield Cup at Goodwood, where, in a desperate, palpitating finish he beat Decision, ridden by Frank Wootton, by one of the shortest heads I have ever seen.

What a race! There is always a touch of pathos about the final appearance of a champion boxer or some great public favourite. I know there were many people at Goodwood that afternoon almost in tears to



PHOTO BY CHARLES MORRIS, MADRID. P. DE V. SWIFT

see this great old horse battling away for dear life against an animal seven years younger than himself. And I don't mind confessing that I, too, felt a bit of a lump rising in my throat when he came back into the paddock with that jaunty air fully appreciative of the fact that he had made his last bow and retired triumphant.

But then and there I made up my mind that if I could possibly help it he would never run another race. I was afraid that somehow or other he might find his way into a selling race and, perhaps, even worse still, be ultimately reduced to the humiliation of a cab. As a personal favour, I asked Mr. Joel to retire him and keep him at Childwick Bury for the remainder of his life. Mr. Joel required no urging in that direction. The idea of Dean Swift descending to the indignity of a selling race was equally distasteful to him.

By a strangely pathetic coincidence, the old chap died while I was actually writing the story of his life. I saw him in the paddocks at Childwick Bury not long before he passed away, looking as rough as ever and as fat as an alderman. He was wandering about among the brood mares placidly cropping the grass and occasionally, no doubt, dreaming of the days when the excited crowds were cheering him home. Long after the Classic horses of his time have been dead and forgotten he will still be an affectionate memory in the recollection of the millions of people who love a gallant horse.

Captain Mark Weyland, well-known as a Steward at several race meetings, once bought a horse named Larig out of Richard Marsh's stable. I was always pretty friendly with him, and when he asked me if I could help him to "try" the horse I approached Mr. Joel and with his consent arranged a gallop.

Captain Weyland had the idea of winning a small

handicap at Ascot, but when I told him the weights to be carried in the trial he seemed rather sceptical about the tackle.

"Would that be good enough?" he asked me in great surprise.

"Yes," I said, "if your horse can beat mine he'll win that race at Ascot."

"All right," Captain Weyland said. "I'll stand on you."

My horse won the trial, but he must have been a pretty useful sort of animal because Larig duly went on to Ascot and won. After the race, Captain Weyland told me he had not had very much on his horse, but in any case he would very much like to make me a present.

"Thank you kindly," I replied. "I am very fond of cigars."

So in due course I received several hundred cigars of a brand little known at that time. Although I am not much of a Shakespearian, I came to have quite a tender regard for Romeo and Juliet after I had smoked my Ascot present. I think they were about the first consignment of the brand that ever came to England and they were just superb. I am a bit of a connoisseur in these matters and those Romeo and Juliets were about the best cigars I ever smoked. People used to follow me around the racecourse to get a whiff of the aroma.

I tell this little story because later in the year I won the Cesarewitch with the horse who had been used to try Larig. I happened to see Captain Weyland at Newmarket after Submit had won when he remarked to me that he did not dream when we were trying that horse of his that he was seeing the winner of the Cesarewitch.

"Well, there you are," I said. "At the time you thought he was not good enough."

Although Submit never did anything better than the Cesarewitch he subsequently came to be a very

well-known horse when he passed out of my hands. He originally belonged to Mr. Henry Barnato, the uncle of Mr. J. B. Joel. As a three-year-old he won some fair races and then, as he stayed very well, I put him in the Cesarewitch, not giving much heed to his chance because it is a race very rarely won by a young horse. We also had him in the Alexandra Handicap at Doncaster, where he was ridden by Tony Escott, now the well-known steeplechase jockey, but then only a tiny little boy. What happened to Submit in the race I could never discover. I lost sight of him completely and thought he must have gone back to his stable, but suddenly he appeared on the scene and very nearly won. However, he afterwards made amends for this lapse by winning two races. Subsequently he broke down, and after vainly trying to patch him up I sold him to John Coleman, the Epsom veterinary surgeon.

The year Submit won the Cesarewitch, 1909, we also had a well-known horse in the race called Pure Gem. For some reason or other we could not run him and at the last minute decided to let Submit take his chance. Some little time before this one of the biggest commission agents in London came to see Mr. J. B. Joel and asked him if he wanted to back Pure Gem for the Cesarewitch.

"He is not going to run," replied Mr. Joel.

But the commissioner had heard such things before. Despite Mr. Joel reiterating that Pure Gem would be a non-runner, he offered to take the odds to £200 from Mr. Joel. Literally, a case of money for nothing, because immediately his caller had left Mr. Joel sent a telegram to scratch the horse.

Then came the question of running Submit. I thought the horse might have had a good chance until a few days before the race. I had run him in a £100 plate at Kempton Park where with 2 to 1 betted on him he just scrambled home by a head from three or four very moderate horses, and on that form his

chances in the Cesarewitch did not appear to be worth serious consideration. However, we decided to let him run. The field that year was mostly composed of lightly weighted four and five-year-olds with nothing appearing to hold an outstanding chance.

Any optimism we felt found no reflection in the market. Submit started at 33 to 1. Said Mr. Joel :

“ There is the £200 from Pure Gem. I'll put it on Submit between us.”

So we had £100 each way between us and Submit gave us a severe shock by winning the race by a head. I never got another race out of the poor old chap.

Little Joe Plant, who rode him in the Cesarewitch, was one of the most comical little fellows I ever came across. Never have I known such an optimist. If at any time a first-class jockey lost a race, he used to say :

“ Did you ever see a thing like that ? If I had ridden that horse I should have won on him easily.”

Sometimes it happened that after being engaged to ride a horse in a particular race the people concerned would want to take him off and give the ride to Frank Wootton. On such occasions Joe's indignation was a sight for the gods.

“ I never heard such cheek in my life,” he would exclaim. “ They want to take me off and put Wootton up. Can you believe it ? ”

At all events, Joe was not a bad little jockey. He had the strength of a lion, and although there certainly was not much of him his quality more than atoned for his lack of inches.

When he found himself getting on in the world, all the friends of his boyhood days used to gather round and borrow his money. One way and another, Joe was always hard up, but the finishing touch came one day when two or three of his needy and greedy friends ventured to suggest the loan of a few shillings to tide them over the next day. But apparently they did not preface their request in a manner befitting the dignity of the jockey who had just won the Cesarewitch.

“ Joe, lend me a few bob, will you ? ” might have done well enough in the days when Joe was but a mere apprentice. On this particular occasion he drew himself up to his full 4 ft. 6 ins. and acidly replied :

“ Not so much of the Joe. Let us have a little more Mr. Plant and then we’ll see how we go.”

Submit, like Dean Swift, was a wonderfully game horse and he certainly proved a great money spinner for Coleman. That individual soon succeeded in patching him up and for something like five or six years afterwards Submit won any number of good hurdle races. He started his career as a jumper in the best handicaps and then, as the years went on, he gradually came down in the world. Coleman almost invariably ran him in bandages, but whether or not he really required them only his owner could tell. I think he must have done it to deter people buying him, but it was certainly marvellous the number of races Coleman won with him. Any time he wanted £500 he only had to put old Submit in a seller and the “ monkey ” was as good as in his bank.

Although he never achieved anything like the same fame as Dean Swift, he undoubtedly became one of the characters of the jumping game. The first race of the day out would come a horse heavily bandaged on the forelegs.

“ Hello, there’s old Submit,” people would cry.

As befitted the winner of the most important long-distance handicap of the year, he used to make hacks of the horses he met in selling races, but his owner continued to run him long after he had earned a pension for the rest of his life. Happening to meet Coleman one day, I said to him :

“ When are you going to give that old horse of mine a rest ? Don’t you think he has had enough ? ”

“ I’m going to run him just once more,” he would reply.

But that once more went on indefinitely, and in the end, I believe, Submit had to be shot. I never quite

forgave his owner for doing so, because when a horse has won you thousands of pounds, as Submit had done for Coleman, the least thing any decent sportsman can do is to let him end his life in a natural and peaceable way. But Coleman was always a somewhat eccentric individual. He used to train his jumpers by walking them down a hill and then making them trot back—something like the famous Duke of York.

CHAPTER VI

I AM compelled to go back a very long time—nearly fifty years to be exact—since I trained my first winner. They were happy days and I can still remember the pride I felt in the very first horse I owned.

I was only in the early twenties and as trainers go I must have been easily the youngest in England. What I lacked in years was amply compensated for in the knowledge which had been imparted to me by my very good friend and employer, Mr. Tom Parr. In my many years' association with the Turf I have never known a better judge of a horse, nor a more workman-like trainer.

Sleek and glossy skins he did not trouble about. So long as his horses were fit and muscular he cared not a rap for their outward appearance. He never wanted them dressed and rubbed down in the meticulous fashion so popular nowadays. Also, he made me his confidant and went out of his way to tell me things he would impart to no one else. Any success which has come my way is largely attributable to old Tom Parr, the best trainer I ever knew.

When he felt himself getting on in years he set me up for myself and in a very short space of time I found myself firmly established in the Great Game. A Yorkshire friend put up a few hundred pounds to buy some yearlings. There were no 14,000 guinea lots in those days. I went to Doncaster and for £300 bought five horses. Luck was on my side. I found a gem among them, a filly named Isabeau, who won me a couple of very good races. Incidentally she involved me in a rather humorous contretemps with old John

Nightingall, the father of the two men who train at Epsom. It was tragic in a way, one of those affairs continually happening on the racecourse. I wanted something to "try" Isabeau. John Nightingall sold me a horse named Sing Song for the purpose and Isabeau gave him a stone and beat him in a canter. The following week I put Sing Song in a selling race at Newmarket, where he was just beaten by an animal called John Day, afterwards one of the best horses in England, whose connections thought so much of him that they bought him in for 1500 guineas.

I did not mind Sing Song being beaten in the least, for it definitely told me that Isabeau was a smashing good filly. Sandown Park came on the next week. John Nightingall had one of his best two-year-olds, First Flight, in the Great Kingston Two-Year-Old Plate. Isabeau was in the same race and I resolved to have a tilt at old John's champion. Charlie Wood rode my filly, while the redoubtable Fred Archer had the ride on First Flight. Said Charlie Wood :

"Has this got any chance?"

"Yes," I said, "I think it is sure to win. It is 21 lbs. better than Sing Song."

Wood immediately said he would like to tell his great friend Sir George Chetwynd about it. But I knew what that meant. The redoubtable Sir George was one of the heaviest plungers of his time and the moment he stepped into the Ring things began to hum. So I told Wood not to bother about that, promising that I would tell Sir George myself and adding, under my breath, when Jackson (my Yorkshire friend) and I had finished with the filly.

Nobody had heard anything about Isabeau, and from 20 to 1 we backed her down to 3 to 1 to win us £10,000. Not a bad start with a £50 horse! She was in a race the following day with a penalty, but Charlie Wood could not ride her, so we engaged Fred Archer. Nightingall ran another one against us, but we beat this just as easily, making old John very

wrath. I remember when he sold me Sing Song and I asked him if he would kindly lend me a bridle and sheet to take the horse home, he did so remarking :

“ I don't know what you are going to do with this horse. I'm afraid he won't be much good to you. Still, good luck to you, my lad.”

That is what I call the luck of the game. It was owing to the services of Sing Song I knew for certain that Isabeau was a top-holer. However, John Nightingall was a good sportsman and he never bore me any ill-will.

Fortune continued to smile on me for some time afterwards, as it usually will if you only work hard enough, whether it be in picking up good horses or finding a lucrative job. Through the kind offices of Mr. H. E. Tidy, a Sackville Street solicitor who will be well remembered by the older generation of race-goers, I came into possession of a smashing fine sprinter named Henry George, whom I afterwards re-christened Reputation. He was trained at Winchester by Alfred Sadler, the father of the very capable man now at Newmarket. How time does fly ! I don't think young Sadler was born then.

Mr. Tidy, who was the only lawyer I ever knew to own horses, had trained for some years with Tom Parr. He and I were old friends. He got to hear about Henry George, sent me down to buy the horse, and ultimately won a lot of races with him. I recollect that we won a race at Newmarket when we were least expecting it, and thus sadly upset a little coup I had in mind.

Reputation turned out a champion sprinter. I took him to Brighton and won a race with 11 st. 7 lbs. up. I had not intended running the horse, but Fred Archer persuaded me otherwise. He could not take the mount himself, having another engagement, but Fred Webb had the ride and, much to my surprise, Reputation literally cantered the race.

Well, so time went on. Things began to go smoothly

with me, and in the early eighties I found myself with quite an amount of money at my command. However, I am not pretending I was a millionaire, and when I went up to the Doncaster sales in 1882 with the idea of picking up a bargain or two in the way of horseflesh, the prices were too high for my purse. Most of the yearlings I liked had brought prices I could not possibly afford. Disconsolate, and thinking I would have to return to Wantage with nothing, I was wandering around the paddocks when I espied a solitary colt being led around by a boy. I liked the look of the animal, and on finding out to whom it belonged, approached the owner and asked him how much he wanted for the horse.

“Well,” said the old gentleman, Wright by name, an old-fashioned Yorkshireman, “he’s a great colt by Thuringian Prince. I want 300 guineas and a contingency.”

“Too much money for me,” I replied. “I’m a poor man. I’ll give you half that sum and another £100 the first time he wins.”

“Done with you,” said the old fellow, and we slapped hands on the bargain in the good old country style.

Bird of Freedom I named the horse, after the famous sporting paper of those times. But the trouble he caused me in the days when I was trying to teach him the business of becoming a racehorse! He suddenly fell lame and I could not find out where. Neither could the veterinary surgeon who examined him. Nothing seemed to do him any good, and I could only keep him in the stable hoping for something to turn up. One day I took him out on the Downs with some other horses when he reared up and got loose. One of Mr. Tidy’s horses went off with him and the two of them galloped away as though they were mad. We eventually found them in a chalk pit where they were fighting together. When we got them back I discovered to my intense astonishment

that Bird of Freedom had lost all traces of his lameness. I put him into active training and found, as I anticipated, that he was a real good horse. He had his first race at Sandown Park where Charlie Wood rode him and won easily. I had backed him for a lot of money, and when I ran him again at Newmarket the following week against a crack two-year-old of John Hammond's he won again. Charlie Wood did not fancy my colt on this occasion, but, nevertheless, he beat Hammond's horse without ever being extended.

I did not win another race with him that year, but the following season I put him in the Lincoln Handicap and the City and Suburban. Being only a three-year-old, he got into the Lincoln with 6 st. 1 lb. and in the City and Suburban with 6 st. 4 lbs., but the difficulty was to get a competent jockey. Mr. W. G. Stevens, the old Ilsley trainer, had the favourite for the Lincoln that year, a horse named Despair, and also a mare called Vermilion. I borrowed the latter to try Bird of Freedom, and my horse came out of the trial so well that I decided to run him in the Lincoln. Had I been able to get a good strong jockey at the weight, Bird of Freedom certainly would have won it. He was well in front fifty yards from the winning-post when suddenly a horse with very similar colours swooped down upon him and just beat him. It was Bendigo, a horse whose fame I need not dwell upon.

Better luck came my way in the City and Suburban. I got Fred Barrett to ride my colt, and after a desperate finish he beat Sam Loates on MacMahon by a short head.

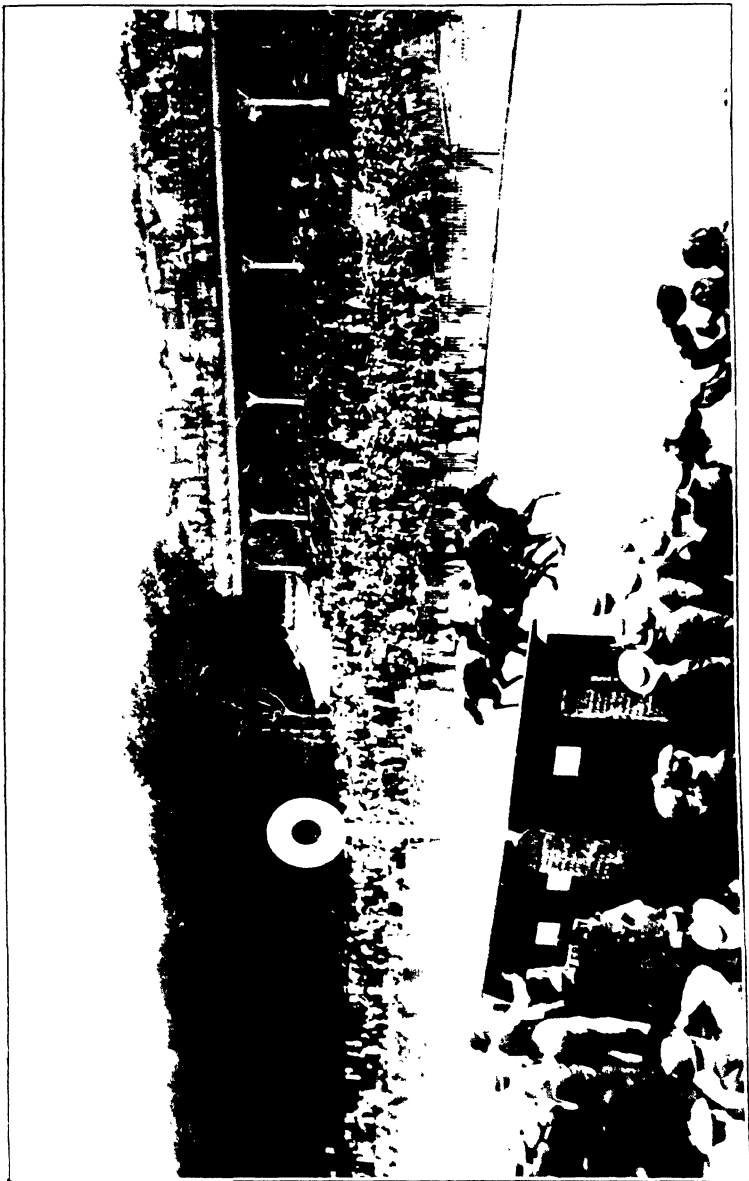
A couple of years' hard work must have brought me a certain amount of fame, for at the end of that time I received the offer to train "Abington" Baird's horses, and thus entered upon an experience which was to have far-reaching effects on my life.

Very few people in the world whose opinion is

worth listening to would deny that the eighties easily represented the finest period the English Turf has ever known. Not only was racing enriched by great horses and superlatively fine horsemen. At that time we possessed many picturesque personalities in the way of owners who could race horses with their two eyes on the sport, unmindful of the rapacities of the Inland Revenue. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales had horses in training with John Porter at Kingsclere, in company with the Duke of Westminster, the Earl of Portsmouth, Mr. Gretton, Sir Frederick Johnstone, and other men who could be truly said to be typical of the aristocracy of England. Old Matthew Dawson had patrons like Lord Falmouth, the Duke of St. Albans, Lord Strafford, Lord Fitzwilliam, and other gentlemen whose names were synonymous with everything that pertained to the inviolable reputation of the Sport of Kings. At Manton House in Wiltshire old Alec Taylor trained the horses of the Duke of Beaufort, the Duchess of Montrose, Lord Edward Somerset, Mr. Astley, and other sportsmen pre-eminent in the land.

The Turf, like almost everything else in the world, has changed out of all recognition in the last forty or fifty years. Horses have become faster, or, at any rate, appear to have done so, just the same as railway trains, motor-cars, and aeroplanes have speeded up the means of locomotion. The day is not far distant when the horse will be discarded as a means of transport, but never, I hope, will the British thoroughbred descend into the limbo of things that are dead and forgotten.

I doubt whether the racehorse of to-day is anything like so good as he was forty or fifty years ago. It has been my fortune to train many horses who have made Turf history, and if it has not been my fate to have the one whom I considered to be the greatest horse of the last half-century, St. Simon, at any rate compensation has been afforded me in the shape of other



TO W. JAMES LAST PAGE — WELSH, CHESTERFIELD, CUP, GOODWOOD — LEFT FROM DECISION AND ORPHAN

nowadays to retire a Classic winner to the stud as soon as possible. Also, horses do not appear to stand hard training as they used to do in times gone by, which is one of my principal reasons for saying that the cracks of to-day are not so good as they were thirty and forty years ago. Furthermore, we had animals like St. Simon and Ormonde who could run in a five or six furlong race and win by a dozen lengths. Then, combining stamina with phenomenal speed, St. Simon won the Ascot Gold Cup and ran another mile before he could be pulled up, and afterwards won the Goodwood Cup, while Ormonde, who won the Two Thousand Guineas, the Derby, and the St. Leger, proved his ubiquity by afterwards twice winning the Hardwicke Stakes and many other good weight for age races.

The Duke of Portland, who owned St. Simon, like the late Duke of Westminster, the possessor of the mighty Ormonde, did not bet. Both of these noblemen had a wonderful run of luck for many years, especially the Duke of Westminster, who continued winning good races right up to the time of his death. And surely it was nothing but perversity of fate that brought about his demise when he had a filly like Sceptre waiting to run the year after he had passed away?

Another grand sportsman of the old school was Lord Falmouth, a great and clever breeder who will be remembered for many years to come. He owned horses long before I came on the Turf, but to the best of my knowledge he never bet at all. I believe on one occasion that he did wager his trainer's wife sixpence about a horse and lost it, whereupon he had that nimble coin mounted in diamonds and sent to the good lady.

I am sorry to see that so few of our Dukes race on any scale to-day. His Grace of Portland, once a power in the land on Turf matters, does not now have his colours bespotted as frequently as once, while the Dukes of Westminster and Beaufort have also practi-

cally dropped out. It is indeed a sorry sign of the times and one can only hope but a passing phase. Great men have the knack of owning great horses, for they are able to race them as they should be raced and not for mere money.

One of the best horses I ever trained, and an animal who might have become famous in this country had unkind Fate not intervened, was Meddler, owned by the late Mr. "Abington" Baird. By John Hammond's horse St. Gatien, who dead-heated in the Derby of 1884 with Harvester, out of "The Squire's" Oaks winner Busybody, he possessed all the aristocratic parentage a horse could desire. He was never beaten as a two-year-old, and in the ordinary course of events he would undoubtedly have gone on and won one or more of the Classics the following year. But then the demon of chance took hold of the situation and ordained that "The Squire" should die a tragically lonely death in New Orleans. By that much-criticized Rule of Racing which decreed that a horse's nominations become void on the death of the owner, Meddler, like St. Simon, could not run in the Classics. Subsequently, his executors sold the colt to go to America for 14,500 guineas where he afterwards played an outstanding part in the present-day excellence of the American racehorse. The Meddler Stud in Kentucky is world famous and it often causes me to wonder what would have happened had the horse remained in England.

Fortune once more took a hand when another great horse came my way. In the ordinary course of events I would have trained Sceptre as a three-year-old, but I left Mr. Sievier in the autumn of 1901 to take over Mr. Joel's horses and Mr. Sievier took charge of the filly himself. I have always thought, if he will forgive me saying so, that he made an irreparable mistake in getting Sceptre fit to run in the Lincoln Handicap of 1902. As a three-year-old she had no weight to carry, but leaving this out of the question it was doubtful

policy getting her ready so early in the season when Mr. Sievier knew, as I did, that she was more than good enough to win all the Classics.

It is almost impossible to keep a horse in anything like racing trim right through the season, particularly to give any animal a severe race like the Lincoln Handicap when you are actually concentrating on the Classics. Even then, I have no doubt, Sceptre would have added the Derby to the four other Classics she won had she been a little more lucky. Had I trained her in her three-year-old season I doubt whether I would have run her in the Lincoln. Grand filly that she was, of charming disposition and a veritable glutton for work, it was really asking too much.

As a racing machine pure and simple Ormonde was probably the greatest horse the world has ever known. He ran three times as a two-year-old, unbeaten on each occasion, ten times as a three-year-old, also undefeated, and thrice as a four-year-old, and when he retired he was still victorious. His greatest triumphs were, of course, as a three-year-old, and they used to bet all sorts of fancy odds on him like 100 to 1 on. He won all three Classics that year and had it not been for the fact that he turned "roarer" in his four-year-old days there is no telling what he might have done.

And yet Ormonde did not look a champion. The critics averred that he was flat-sided, weak in the neck, and unduly muscled-up about the shoulders. It was commonly said that he looked for all the world like a great coach horse. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Ormonde made a hack of everything he met. However, his career at the stud failed to equal the amazing success of St. Simon. In a later chapter of the book I shall tell of an extraordinary experience I underwent with an American who tried to buy the Duke of Westminster's crack after he had been sold to America.

As befitted a champion of champions, Ormonde had something that no other horse has ever had. The Duke of Westminster gave a reception for his equine hero at Grosvenor House, Park Lane, to which kings and queens, princes and princesses, and all the nobility of the land were invited. The "damned great coach horse" treated them all with regal disdain, even to the length of trying to eat a piece out of a venturesome Rajah who tried to be too familiar with him. Some of the Eastern potentates even aspired to rob the Duke's garden of its blooms to pay tribute to this mighty horse.

CHAPTER VII

JUST as the eighties synchronized with the presence of what I consider to be the greatest horses I ever saw, so it also stands out for all time by a run of jockeys who were infinitely superior to anything we have had since.

I may be prejudiced in saying that our present-day jockeys are not altogether of the same class as men like Fred Archer, George Fordham, Tom Cannon, and others I shall mention. But I am not making this statement at random. You cannot compare the past with the present unless you have experienced both. The older generation of owners and trainers all concur in the superiority of the jockeys of the period I have mentioned.

It made me smile during the writing of this book when I read an article in a daily paper comparing Archer and Fordham with the present generation of jockeys, in which the writer said that neither of these two men were anything like as good as Donoghue, Elliott, Gordon Richards, and one or two more of the leading riders we have now. Such an opinion would receive no corroboration whatever from the men best qualified to speak on the matter. I base my opinion not on hearsay, nor even on theoretical knowledge, but simply from my own personal experience. When you train horses for a living and of necessity use all the ingenuity and resource at your command to get the best jockeys you become, as a matter of course, a pretty fair judge of those who can—and those who cannot—ride a good race.

Let me relate a little story which may possibly assist in proving what I say. One day at Kempton

Park races, when everybody was crowding the platforms on their way back to town, I just managed to scramble into a carriage where I found two or three well-known owners, among them the late Lord Rothschild. As the train was steaming out of the station Danny Maher came running along the platform and Lord Rothschild called to him to come into our carriage. During the journey the conversation turned on riding. Lord Rothschild took the opportunity to congratulate Maher on a wonderful race he had ridden that day, but he went on to say :

“ With all due deference to you, Maher, the best jockey I have ever seen in my life—you included—is Fordham.”

And Danny quietly replied : “ So I have always heard, my lord.”

Now, Lord Rothschild was a man who had employed all sorts of jockeys to ride for him and he told Maher to his face that Fordham was the best he had ever seen. Therefore, I am not alone in my opinion.

I always got Fred Archer when I could—who would not ? He and Fordham were contemporaries, but their styles were absolutely different. On courses like Epsom and Brighton Archer would beat his rival because he was the more fearless and would take risks that Fordham declined. One could find no more interesting sight in the world than to see these two champions riding against each other. Archer, 5 ft. 10 ins. in height, with broad shoulders but extremely thin, rode upright, while Fordham rode with a crouch.

In the days I am referring to there used to be many matches and almost invariably Fordham and Archer were the jockeys chosen to ride. Some of these duels were tremendous, but certainly Fordham won the majority of them. He was the best judge of pace I have ever seen and the brilliant finishes he rode were masterpieces. He would never hit a horse except in the last two or three strides, just sufficient to make the animal win by a short head. And his

style of riding, if not precisely the forerunner of the modern crouch, was as near perfection as anything I have known.

George (known as "The Demon") had been the champion jockey of England years before Archer came on the scene, but I am sorry to say he took to drink and temporarily abandoned riding. He went to live at Slough where, as far as I could hear, he used to spend his time drinking vast quantities of gin. To all intents and purposes he passed out of the public mind, and close on three years had elapsed when a friend happened to say to him :

"What do you want to go on like this for? You are not an old man. Why not come back and ride again?"

"Me!" exclaimed George. "Why, if I tried to sit on a horse now I would fall off."

Anyhow, this friend finally induced him to go to Newmarket and ride a few horses at exercise to see how he felt. Old Tom Jennings had a lot of animals in training about this time and, anxious to help Fordham, gave him plenty of practice until Fordham began to regain his old confidence. Then he rode in a race and won it—his first appearance on a racecourse for three years.

Never in all my life have I seen such a reception. The Duke of Wellington returning to England after the Battle of Waterloo had no more memorable ovation than George Fordham received when he returned to the scene of his old triumphs. From thence onward he never rode better in his life and as late as 1883, when he must have been nearing fifty years of age, he rode Hauteur, the winner of the One Thousand Guineas. As far back as 1854, when he was a very little boy, he won the Chester Cup on a horse called Epaminondas carrying the featherweight of 4 st. 10 lbs. He was always very popular with all the owners and trainers, the essence of modesty and anxious only to avoid the innumerable congratulations that used to be

showered upon him. To ascertain from him what had happened in a race was hopeless. He had a great habit of saying when he got off a horse: "Well, don't you see, I just went up and—er—don't you know, I—er—just managed to win." He won the Oaks in 1859, 1868, 1870, 1872, and 1881, but during all the years he rode he only succeeded in winning the Derby once and then on a very moderate animal called St. Bevys. But despite this, he rode the winner of practically every big race in the country at some time or another, and I think that I would rate him a greater jockey than Archer. Not only was he more skilful but he possessed the greater finishing power, and one could count the number of races he threw away on the fingers of one hand.

Both he and Archer were idolized by the public, Fordham representing the older school of jockeys, Archer the new. I think Fordham was inclined to be slightly nervous towards the last two or three years of his riding career, but once on top of the horse all the old confidence returned to him and he would win as brilliantly as he had done in the days of yore.

Nevertheless, Fred Archer excelled in many ways and he also possessed a characteristic which very few jockeys have—that of being an excellent judge of a horse. It frequently happened that Archer would see something in a race and go to the owner and say:

"Let me ride that horse the next time it runs. I think I can do better with him."

When this took place he almost invariably won, one of the reasons why he rode so many winners. I should also mention that Archer enjoyed a great deal of his success when Fordham dropped out of the game for a time, though I would be the last person in the world to decry his masterly dash and immense courage.

When only a boy of sixteen, weighing very little over five stone, he won the Cesarewitch of 1872 on a horse called Salvanos. And then, for fourteen years afterwards, he enjoyed an uninterrupted run of

success, the like of which I have never seen before and certainly shall never see again. He rode the winner of five Derbies and fully fifteen hundred other races and, towards the latter years of his life, under the terrible trying handicap of having to starve himself throughout the flat-racing season. He used to have a Turkish Bath in his own house. The method he adopted to keep his weight down was to lie in the bath for hours on end, taking physic and eating nothing, so that when the fever that ultimately cost him his life came along, he had no reserve strength left to meet it. I have no doubt he would never have committed suicide by shooting himself had the typhoid fever which laid him low not brought about such acute depression that he felt life to be not worth living. Certainly it must have been a wretched existence for a man of his build living in a state of starvation and then, in bitter irony, to be stricken with a disease in which it is impossible to take food.

He had engaged himself to ride a horse called St. Mirin in the Cambridgeshire of 1886 for the Duchess of Montrose. She was a lady deeply enamoured of Archer's skill in the saddle and would have no one else ride her horses.

Anyhow, Fred Archer came by his death through wanting to ride the Duchess's horse in the Cambridgeshire, and after the race, when he was beaten by a comparatively unknown jockey on *The Sailor Prince*, he fell ill. I saw him at Lewes the following week when he complained to Martin Gurry, the old Newmarket trainer, of being unwell. Martin promptly sent him home where he took to his bed and was found to be suffering from typhoid. While half out of his mind, and no doubt feeling that his career as a jockey had practically finished, he shot himself, to the grief of the entire nation.

I suppose we shall never see his like again. No kinder-hearted man ever lived, and the number of

lame backers he helped over the racing stile must have ran into thousands. Men in desperate straits would come to him for a winner to get them out on the week and he never refused to help them if he possibly could. Had he been spared to take up the career of a trainer, I have no doubt he would have gone on to emblazon his name still more brilliantly in the annals of the Turf.

Looking back over the memories of my younger days as a trainer there stands out vivid recollections of many a soul-stirring finish. In the eighties it was not a question of one jockey being head and shoulders above the others. At that time there were more than a dozen first-class horsemen infinitely superior in every way to most of the riders we have seen in the last few years. Men like Fordham, Tom Cannon, Archer, Goater, Custance, Constable, Wood, Webb, Watts, Maidment, John Osborne, and one or two others could ride a horse in any race and be depended upon to win if the animal was good enough.

Fred Archer rode what I consider to be one of the finest races of his life when he won the Derby of 1880 on the Duke of Westminster's Bend Or. Nothing but superlative jockeyship could have beaten Robert the Devil, who ran second, but Archer did it by a masterly effort of judgment in which he kept an infinitely better horse at bay by a head amidst a palpitating excitement that was only equalled four years later when St. Gatien dead-heated with Harvester.

Another extraordinary exhibition of horsemanship by Archer was the Derby of 1885 when he rode Lord Hastings' Melton to victory, also by a head, at the expense of Mr. Broderick Cloete's Paradox, the opposing rider on this occasion being Fred Webb. Melton, who was afterwards purchased by the late Mr. James Musker and subsequently became the foundation of the Thetford Stud, was, of course, a nailing good

horse. He went on to win the St. Leger, but he might very well have lost the Derby had it not been for the courage of his jockey. Not long before the race, Archer, while out on Newmarket Heath, received a very severe mauling from a savage horse. He had been badly bitten and one arm was practically useless. Lord Hastings did not want him to ride, but Fred insisted and, crippled though he was, pulled out a brilliant finish to score by a head which it looked long odds against him. But then it was characteristic of the man. His whole heart and soul lay in his profession and that, undoubtedly, accounted for the many years of success he enjoyed.

But nevertheless I am not going to say that even Archer displayed the finest horsemanship I have ever seen. That honour, if I may presume to award it, must be reserved for George Fordham who at the Newmarket Houghton Meeting in the Jockey Club Cup of 1883, after he had returned to the Turf in circumstances I have already related, won a race against what were then three of the finest jockeys of the period.

As horsemen go, Fordham was then a comparatively old man. He had been riding for fully thirty years, but he still remained the incomparable master of his craft. The people who were present at Newmarket on that occasion witnessed an epic battle they never forgot to their dying day. Corrie Roy, ridden by Charlie Wood, was the favourite at 5 to 2 on. Fred Archer rode a good one in Dutch Oven, while Fred Webb on Faugh-a-Ballagh had another more than useful animal under him.

Fordham on Ladislas gave them something to remember. He dropped down on Charlie Wood in the last fifty yards and beat him a head amid a turmoil of excitement which has rarely been seen on the Classic Heath.

The redoubtable Charles, never at a loss on such occasions, remarked to me after the race :

“What do you think of that? You never know where he is on the course. He ought to be somewhere else,” mentioning a place slightly warmer than Newmarket.

I knew old John Osborne for fifty years and at the time I consider the best period we have ever enjoyed in the way of horsemanship, John could hold his own with the best of them. They called him the Bank of England jockey, an excellent description of the man who never did a dishonest thing in his life, nor ever said an unkind word about anyone. No trainer would dream of asking John not to win a race. They might tell him not to punish the horse if he could not win, but that was as far as they got.

John used to ride with a bit of a crouch and the way he used his arms during a race, with his elbows stuck out at right angles, looked for all the world as though he were pushing the horse along. Hence the nickname which clung to him to the end of his days, “The Pusher.” Being a North countryman, he naturally rode most of his races up north, but he always came south to ride in the more important events and, as the history of the Turf shows, he lost nothing by comparison with his contemporaries. As far back as 1857 he rode Lord Zetland’s *Vedette* to victory in the Two Thousand Guineas. Thirty-one years later, after a marvellous run of success, at a time of life when most jockeys have finished, he reappeared at Newmarket and won the Guineas again on the Duke of Portland’s *Ayrshire*. Truly, a wonderful man!

Almost invariably on the last day of the flat-racing season, with rain, fog, and snow doing its best to live up to Manchester tradition, John would ride a winner or two. Something would come out of the gloom practically indistinguishable in the failing light. The number of the winner would go up, people would look at their cards and discover that old John Osborne, as they affectionately knew him, had pushed still another one home.

When John retired from the Turf they gave him something that no one else has ever received in the history of racing. He was a comparatively rich man, but nevertheless a public testimonial which ran into thousands of pounds was organized and presented to him as a mark of the esteem and admiration in which he was held. Of course, in many ways John Osborne's character was highly exceptional. In the days when jockeys could bet without fear of the Stewards he would never have more than £1 on a horse. He never drank, and instead of whiling away his leisure time on Sundays he became a churchwarden and read the lessons and thus proved to the world that a jockey could also become an object lesson to the younger generation.

Poor old James Snowden, another prominent rider of the time, had all the admiration in the world for John Osborne. James could admire, if not altogether able to emulate, John Osborne's uncompromising abstention from smoking and drinking. However, in justice to Snowden, I want to aver that the latter pastime in no way interfered with his customary skill in the saddle. I recollect an occasion at Derby when he had to ride in a race and turned up for the performance absolutely "blind." That did not matter. People would have been more surprised had he been completely sober. But it somewhat hurt James' dignity when the trainer of his horse began putting a pair of blinkers on the animal.

"Eh, what's that tha doing?" he muttered. "What's t'use both of us being blind?"

All things considered, I think I much prefer the jockeys of forty and fifty years ago. Hard drinkers some of them may have been, but they were men and knew how to behave themselves. They did not receive fabulous fortunes for their skill and were all the better for it. In their behaviour and their attitude towards their employers they were infinitely more respectful than some of the young gentlemen of

to-day. For instance, you never saw them coming from the weighing-room smoking a cigarette which they declined to discard until they got up on their horse.

It is not so very long ago that a notice was put up in the weighing-rooms forbidding jockeys to smoke in that particular place. But what happened? Practically a mutiny took place, and in the approved Trade Union style a deputation, headed by one of the leading jockeys of the day, waited upon the powers that be and was successful in getting the embargo removed on the understanding that the smoking was not indulged in to excess.

One of the principal reasons why so many capable young jockeys vanish into obscurity early in life is that they are not subjected to sufficient discipline. The pitfalls and temptations surrounding them are very great and it is only in the interests of the boys themselves that they should be compelled to behave themselves in a circumspect manner. However, it is no use preaching. I think the American invasion largely accounted for the present-day slackness. One can well understand a jockey, especially when he is getting on in years a bit, wanting a fillip for his nerves. Even under the best of conditions race riding is a hazardous profession. When horses are racing at forty miles an hour there is always the risk of a disastrous crash, and it stands to reason that the riders must have all their wits about them. But incessant drinking or cigarette smoking is fatal and ought to be suppressed as far as possible.

I don't want to moralize—we all have our little faults. But in common with a good many of my friends who will not mind if I describe them as the Boys of the Old Brigade, I cannot but lament the great decline in jockeyship in the last twenty-five years. Latterly the problem has become even more acute, as many of the most famous trainers in the land have discovered.

CHAPTER VIII

TRIUMPH and then tragedy characterized the victory of Humorist in the Derby of 1921. My memorable win with Sunstar ten years earlier was sufficiently dramatic to satisfy most people to whom the paramount appeal in racing is sensation. Well, they had their fill and more with poor Humorist.

It may be thought particularly ironic that a horse bearing such a name as Humorist should be so closely associated with tragedy. For a tragedy it was in the most profound sense of the word. Mr. J. B. Joel's great horse won the Epsom Classic in brilliant fashion and then, shortly afterwards, died in pitiful circumstances that would have broken down the reserve of a much harder-hearted man than myself. Over eight years have passed since that time, but the memory of it remains bitter and will do so as long as I live.

Humorist was what I might call a family bred horse. He was by that great sire Polymelus belonging to Mr. S. B. Joel out of his owner's mare Jest, who had won the Oaks in 1913. There is no necessity, then, for me to assert that Humorist rejoiced in the possession of some of the best racing blood in the country and, in the ordinary course of events, if he trained on as a horse should do, then he would certainly make a name for himself.

He came to me in the autumn of 1919 when I had again taken up training after the difficult days of the war. I had gone to Childwick Bury to look over the yearlings bred by Mr. J. B. Joel before they were despatched to my place at Letcombe Regis, and I remarked to Mr. Joel on going through the paddocks

that we should be very unlucky if we did not find something pretty good out of all the animals available.

Four of them stood out from the others—Humorist, Stargazer, Thunderer, and Hamlet. In all, twenty-five yearlings came to Letcombe Regis and it did not take me long to discover that Humorist was easily the best of them all. A better tempered animal I have never known and everybody in the stables found it a pleasure to have anything to do with the colt. No trace could then be seen of the ailment which subsequently put an end to his tragically short career on the Turf, but there is no doubt that he must have contracted it before he actually began racing. During the winter he went on extremely well. I tried him several times and, having the right material in the stable, could do it without much possibility of a mistake.

The first race selected for him was the Woodcote Stakes at Epsom and, according to the form he had shown me on the training grounds at Wantage, it looked a certainty for him. But after he had successfully gone through his last trial he started to go off his feed and generally gave me the impression that he would not win. His coat was staring, and when Donoghue was about to get up on him I remarked that we would be lucky to win. At all events, Humorist won the race and gave me no more anxiety until Ascot, when he started coughing.

All idea of running the horse had to be abandoned and it took me some considerable time before I could get him well again. The autumn was drawing on before I ran him again, this time in the rich Champagne Stakes at Doncaster. From what he had shown me on the trial grounds at Wantage with Thunderer, I looked upon him as a ready-made winner. I knew him to be at least a stone in front of the other two-year-olds, but all the time I felt there was something wrong with him. It continually puzzled me why he would be perfectly well one day and listless the next.

I tried him a week before the Champagne Stakes. He beat Thunderer and several other good horses by eight or ten lengths, and knowing as I did that Thunderer was also pretty useful, it made him practically a stone-cold certainty. At all events, I took the two of them to Doncaster and had them both on the spot in case of emergencies. Mr. Joel said to me :

“ I suppose you will run them both ? ”

“ What is the use of running two when you have one so far in front of the other ? ” I replied.

“ All right,” he said, “ do as you like.”

Well, Humorist did not win and I could have kicked myself for not running Thunderer as well. I had instructed Donoghue not to knock him about, but after the race he informed me that Humorist had run lazily.

“ I am not blaming you,” I said to Donoghue.

My opinion of the result being altogether wrong received striking confirmation at Newbury the following week when Thunderer, carrying 9 st. 6 lbs., ran in the Foal Stakes and won in a canter, giving two stone to a very good filly of Sir Abe Bailey's called Herself. It made Thunderer at least two and a half stone better than Herself, and as Humorist was something like a stone in front of Thunderer—at home—it made him out easily the best two-year-old in England.

Of course, there always remained the possibility that Thunderer was a much better horse on a race-course than on the training-ground and there is no doubt that if I had run him in the Champagne Stakes he would certainly have won it because the opposition contained few really good horses.

Humorist then had a couple of comparatively easy races. He ran in the Buckenham Stakes in which he beat a very useful horse called The Night Patrol trained by Mr. George Lambton. This must have been a pretty good animal, because he was subsequently sold to the Earl of Stradbroke, Governor of Victoria, a relative of the famous Admiral Rous, who

paid, I think, 6000 guineas for him, and after winning £25,000 in stakes, resold the horse for the stud at the very nice price of £30,000.

Following this, Humorist ran in the Clearwell Stakes where, with 7 to 1 betted on him, he beat a solitary opponent in a canter, and he then went on well enough until the Middle Park Plate came along for decision, where I had every reason to hope that he would at last show me his true form.

This time I had no intention of repeating the mistake I had made at Doncaster. I ran both Humorist and Thunderer, Carslake riding Humorist and Donoghue the other. Donoghue preferred Thunderer of the two; he had ridden them both in their trials, and he endorsed my opinion of Thunderer being an infinitely better horse on the racecourse than on the training ground. However, the result of the Middle Park Plate conclusively proved Humorist to be the better of the two, but even then he did not win the race. That unlucky horse Monarch for once in his life had good fortune on his side. He beat Humorist by a neck, and Carslake swore to me it was one of the flukiest races he had ever known.

"This horse of yours is a dead stayer," he told me, as he dismounted. "He didn't get a good passage, but with ordinary luck he will win the Derby."

That, at any rate, gave me a good deal of comfort, and Mr. Joel remarked to me a few days after the race:

"I don't know whether we shall win any of the Classics with Humorist, but we shall certainly be mentioned in connection with them."

However, as I have said before, I keep such hopes and fears to myself. A two-year-old may go into winter quarters unbeaten, but it does not necessarily follow that it will be anything like so good when the spring comes and you begin to find out how your horses have progressed. Still, our colt went on very well during the winter and during this time revealed

no trace of any malady likely to put a premature end to his life.

I tried him for the Two Thousand Guineas, when he showed me a very fine performance. We had bought an animal named Corn Sack from Sir Ernest Paget specially to lead Humorist in his work. Moreover, he was a good handicap horse and in any trial would be able to tell us pretty definitely what Humorist was worth. Our Derby horse came out of the ordeal so well that I told Mr. Joel we could hardly lose the Two Thousand. In fact, he only wanted to retain his two-year-old form to make the first of the Classics a certainty, and on the day of the race I felt confident of having found another Sunstar.

It was a heavy betting race. The late Mr. James White, an intimate friend of Mr. Joel's, had Granely (who afterwards won the Lincoln) running and optimistically informed him that his colt would be sure to beat Humorist.

"Don't you believe it," said Mr. Joel, "I think it is a good thing for mine."

An hour or so before the Two Thousand was due for decision Mr. Joel informed me that his friend Mr. White intended to beat us. What did I think about the matter?

I could not see it myself. In fact, I thought it was long odds on Humorist beating Granely, whatever else might happen. So on the strength of this information Mr. Joel went back to Mr. White and offered to bet him £5000 that we would beat his horse. But for once Mr. White's customary confidence was lacking and he would not accept the wager.

Before Donoghue got up on Humorist I told him to ride a waiting race.

"Don't worry him," I said to Stephen. "He is inclined to be delicate, and if you give him a bit of time, he will win whenever you want him. He is fast enough to beat anything."

It proved to be a thrilling race. Humorist got well

away from the gate and was striding along apparently without an effort. It looked to be 33 to 1 on him. Everybody in the stands was shouting "Humorist" and I was just congratulating myself on winning the first of the Classics when suddenly he collapsed, leaving Lemonora and Craig-en-eran to go on and win. I could hardly believe my eyes, and when Donoghue was getting off the horse I asked him what had happened.

"He did not stay," replied Stephen.

"All the same," I replied, "I think he will win the Derby."

In the meantime other matters concerning the Derby claimed my attention. That very good friend of mine, Harry Cottrill, the Lambourn trainer, approached Mr. Joel for the purpose of borrowing a horse called The Jester to try his Derby colt Leighton. This horse belonged to Mr. W. A. Whineray, a Liverpool cotton broker, and had been unbeaten as a two-year-old without, however, having been pitted against any of the cracks.

Cottrill's confidence in his horse was unbounded. He simply declined to entertain the idea of Leighton being even able to lose the Derby, though to be sure Mr. Joel chafed him unmercifully about training the winner of the Epsom Classic so early in his career. He had just recently set up for himself and had had the good fortune to find a very useful horse in this colt by Roi Herode—Queen of the Earth. But, as I say, Leighton had not shown his paces against the cracks, and for my part I felt more than optimistic of beating him with Humorist. At any rate, Cottrill succeeded in imbuing quite a number of people, including the owner, with his enthusiasm and after obtaining Mr. Joel's permission to borrow The Jester, a party went down to Lambourn to see Leighton tried.

Personally, I could not understand what use a horse like The Jester would be to "try" a Derby candidate.

At that particular time he was just a cut above selling-plate form and, as a matter of fact, that is what he did descend to. As may be imagined, Leighton beat him in a hack canter and Cottrill concluded that the Derby was in his pocket. Mr. Joel laughingly warned him that he would still be sure to beat him with Humorist, but he utterly refused to believe it. The owner asked Mr. Joel to back the horse for him and I fancy Mr. Joel retorted that he would on this particular occasion be pleased to lay the odds himself.

During this time Humorist caused me a good deal of anxiety. One day he would look the picture of health, his coat glistening with a sheen only to be found when horses are in perfect condition. The next day he would be listless and off his feed, keeping me in a continual state of suspense as to whether or not he would actually run in the Derby and do himself justice. I thought something may have been the matter with his teeth, which often makes horses eat badly, but after finding nothing wrong there I could only conclude that it was too mysterious for even a veterinary surgeon to solve. These little lapses would last two or three days, when he would recover and be as well as ever. Certainly he showed no signs of breaking blood vessels.

Who would ride the horse? Stephen Donoghue, Frank Bullock, and Bernard Carslake stood out head and shoulders amongst the jockeys of that year, but all of them were retained for other stables. I badly wanted Donoghue. On the switchback Epsom track he has no superior in the world. His immense dash and courage are worth 7 lbs. to a horse in a race like the Derby.

Unfortunately for us, Lord Derby had first claim and fully intended that Donoghue should ride his horse. But Stephen himself, knowing the animal had no chance whatever, wanted to ride ours. The difficulty in the way was to get Lord Derby's consent. When an owner pays the crack jockey a retainer

running into thousands of pounds he naturally expects to get his money's worth. However, there is a good deal of camaraderie on the Turf and Mr. Joel approached Mr. George Lambton and asked whether Lord Derby would entertain the idea of Donoghue being released to ride Humorist.

Lord Derby is always a good sportsman and although he could not quite see the force of letting Donoghue go, he tentatively agreed to the proposal with the stipulation that if his own horse went on well enough to give him an outside chance, Donoghue would have to take the mount. So there the matter had to be left for the time being, making it necessary for Mr. Joel to find another jockey in case Lord Derby felt inclined to exercise his claim on Donoghue.

I had a good look round the jockeys available and came to the conclusion we would have to go abroad. George Stern was getting a little out of touch with jockeyship and ultimately we fixed upon another French rider, George Bellhouse. Even then we hung on hoping to get Donoghue and, let it be said, Donoghue also began to grow a little anxious. Stephen never liked riding a horse in the Derby with no chance. He thought that ours was a good thing.

Within a few days of the race Mr. Joel ascertained that Lord Derby had practically decided to exercise his option on Donoghue.

"This won't do," he said to me over the telephone, "I will have to see what can be done."

He again approached Mr. Lambton, who courteously told him that his own horse had very little chance, promising that he would once more see Lord Derby and ascertain whether he might, in the circumstances, let us have the rider we so badly wanted.

What his lordship thought about the matter must be left to the imagination. Here he had paid a big retainer for the crack jockey, only to find himself being pressed to let someone else have the benefit of the

finest rider of his time on the Epsom course. But, being one of the best sportsmen in the land, he consented to give way and at the last moment Mr. Joel and I had the gratification of knowing that if Humorist lost the Derby it would not be for want of jockeyship.

When we reached Epsom on Derby day, his lordship, who had the next box to Mr. Joel, saw me there and called me outside. He then proceeded to give me a first-class lecture upon retaining jockeys and all the attendant problems thereto.

“Now, look here, Mr. Morton,” he said, “I am giving way on this occasion because Mr. Joel has been placed in an invidious position. I know you are practically without a jockey and although I don’t suppose my horse has very much chance, I don’t see why I should not be entitled to have the jockey whose services I pay for. As you have been given to understand you can have Donoghue, I have decided to waive my claim. But, understand, it is the first time and the last time. Whether my horse has a chance or not, the jockey whose services I pay for must ride for me.”

However, everything ended amicably and I went back into Mr. Joel’s box to see the Derby run.

My riding instructions to Donoghue were brief but explicit.

“Whatever you do, don’t come to the front until you feel you have got the race won. He has such tremendous speed that you can put him where you like any time.”

I did not fear much. Lord Astor’s colt Craig-en-eran had certainly beaten Humorist in the Guineas, but I anticipated a different result this time. Leighton I did not fear at all, whatever Harry Cottrill may have thought, and as the race was run there could be no doubt that the better horse won. Off they went to a fine start with Humorist always in a good place. You cannot beat Donoghue on the Epsom course.



MR. T. P. COLE, THOROPEL WINSER OF DEBBY, 1871

He is almost invariably away well, and in the Derby of 1921 when I looked for Humorist to justify the good opinion I held of him, they had only gone a couple of furlongs when Donoghue brought Humorist over to the rails—although he had been drawn on the outside—with only two other horses, Leighton and Alan Breck, in front of him. They came round Tattenham Corner with the crowd already shouting the winner, Humorist lying nice and handy on the rails ready to make his run the moment Donoghue called on him. Alan Breck collapsed directly they got into the straight. He had been ridden for speed and might have won the race had it been a mile. Then Leighton, the hope of Lambourn, dramatically faded out, fully confirming what I had thought that he was a long way behind Classic form.

With my eyes glued on the horses, I saw Humorist in front with the race apparently at his mercy, and I fervently hoped Donoghue would not hit him. All he had to do was to keep him going. A furlong from the winning-post Craig-en-eran made a resolute challenge but Donoghue, riding with that irresistible manner so typical of him, comfortably held him at bay and won by a neck. And thus, after all, had I been justified in thinking Humorist to be the best of his age.

Lord Derby, like the great sportsman he is, was the first to congratulate Mr. Joel, and for our part we could not but feel deeply obliged for the unselfish spirit which had prompted him to sacrifice his own needs on the all-important race of the year.

And I, for one, felt more than delighted when in 1924 his lordship at last succeeded in his lifelong ambition of winning the Blue Riband of the Turf himself. No owner in England has devoted more time and spent more money on the Turf. We had beaten him in 1911 when his colt Stedfast ran second to Sunstar, and perhaps he may have thought it a trifle ironic that we should have wanted to borrow his

jockey in 1921 to win another Derby. However, Dame Fortune amply compensated his lordship for the ill-luck of previous years when his good horse Sansovino won the greatest race in the world, and I sincerely hope that his black jacket and white cap will be seen to the fore on other Derby winners.

Apart from the moral gratification of winning the Derby, there is also the monetary aspect to be considered. In these days, when a good Classic winner is worth anything up to £100,000, Humorist's triumph gave both Mr. Joel and myself the satisfaction of knowing that we now possessed a sire who might worthily take Sunstar's place at the Childwick Bury stud.

My own share in the victory received substantial acknowledgment in the shape of a gift of £5000, while Donoghue received £2000.

But now comes the heart-breaking tragedy. I did not take Humorist back to Wantage on the night of his victory, thinking to give him a day or two's rest. In the light of after events it was rather extraordinary that instead of being the worse for his race, he looked infinitely better. He seemed half as heavy again, and when I had his photograph taken on the lawn of Mr. Gody's place in Epsom, he appeared to be in the most perfect condition. Mr. Gody himself remarked what a splendid picture the horse made. His coat shone like satin, and I am quite certain he gave no indication whatever of the truly lamentable fate that was so soon in store for him.

I sent him back to Wantage on the Friday apparently in the full bloom of health. He was engaged in two or three races at Ascot a fortnight afterwards, and I arranged to run him on the Friday in the Hardwicke Stakes. Several other of our horses were also due to run at Ascot, and I took Humorist with them on the Monday intending to give him a gallop over the course. On the Tuesday, in company with several of his stable companions, he went a steady canter

prior to doing his gallop and I noticed then how wonderfully he moved.

I happened to be standing with two or three friends about 150 yards from where the horses pulled up when Mr. S. B. Joel's trainer, De Mestre, came up to me and, to my great surprise, told me that my horse was bleeding.

"What horse?" I asked.

"Humorist."

"But he has only been a steady canter," I replied, hurrying over to the horse to find out what was wrong.

A chill struck my heart when I found poor Humorist bleeding profusely and surrounded by several people. I could not understand it. If he had gone a strong gallop he might have broken a blood-vessel as I had always feared. The bleeding did not stop and I was compelled to send a man for the nearest veterinary surgeon. However, before he could come the blood ceased to flow and I walked Humorist to his stable a couple of hundred yards away. When the veterinary surgeon arrived I had had all the blood sponged away leaving nothing to show what had happened. However, the "vet" examined him and told me I would not be able to do any work with the horse for some time.

"But he is going to run on Friday," I said.

"You will be very ill-advised if you do," replied the "vet." "He will have to have a good rest before he gets over this."

I telephoned Mr. Joel to break the bad news.

"I should like to run him if it is at all possible," he said. "You have always told me it is the best thing to do with a horse after he has broken a blood-vessel."

But in the light of the veterinary surgeon's advice I could not then agree and, as Humorist went on in the next day or two, it became manifest that if he ever ran again it would not be at Ascot that year.

In the meantime, several of Mr. Joel's friends

decided to have a picture painted of Humorist and had commissioned that renowned horse painter, Mr. A. J. Munnings, for the task. I took the colt back to Wantage and the following week Mr. Munnings arrived. He made several sketches of the horse, and on each occasion remarked how well he looked. On the Sunday morning Mr. Munnings made another sketch and told me if he could have Humorist for three-quarters of an hour in the afternoon it would be sufficient for his purpose. Lunch time came and after the meal Mr. Munnings sat on the lawn in front of the house reading a book, little dreaming of the pitiful tragedy then being enacted.

My head lad had gone to the stables to take out a horse requiring afternoon exercise. As he opened the door of the box he saw a stream of blood pouring from underneath the door of the adjacent box. He came rushing inside to me to break the news. I went and opened the door and there I found my Derby winner lying dead, literally in a welter of blood.

Words failed me as I think even now of the pitiful sight. I have seen many sorrowful tragedies in my long experience of racehorses, but the spectacle of poor Humorist lying dead that Sunday afternoon caused me a grief I shall never forget. He had done all that a horse could do; won for us the greatest race in the world, only to be struck down in the full glory of his triumph. Mr. Munnings felt almost as upset as myself. He could not believe his eyes; only a few hours before he had stood beside the horse and had then remarked how well he looked.

Well, the next thing to be done was to acquaint Mr. Joel with the sad tidings. I telephoned to Childwick Bury and asked him to come over to Wantage at once. He was completely dumbfounded and as horror-stricken as I had been. At the time of my telephone call he had been showing some friends round the stud at Childwick Bury and had expressed his pleasure at the thought of having another good

Derby winner to carry on when Sunstar, in the accepted order of things, had to make way for a younger horse.

Mr. Joel immediately ordered his car and motored over to Wantage. But, of course, nothing could be done. Humorist lay dead and it merely remained for Mr. Joel to grieve with me in the loss of what was then possibly the most valuable horse in England. Mr. Joel, however, gave no thought to that aspect of the matter. I attempted to offer what little consolation I could, to which he replied that he felt more sorry for the grief I was feeling than for any money that might be involved.

Under the circumstances, we decided to have a post-mortem on our tragically unfortunate Derby winner, and to that end we had all that remained of Humorist removed to Childwick Bury where a veterinary surgeon conducted the autopsy and discovered the horse to have been suffering from consumption and severe hæmorrhage of the lungs. How he had ever won the Derby under such a handicap will for ever remain a mystery of the Turf. But, nevertheless, of one thing there can be no question whatever, the gallant courage of the horse, worthy of the highest traditions of the British thoroughbred.

Mr. Joel felt so cut up at the loss of his horse that he would not take the picture which Mr. Munnings subsequently completed. All that remains of Humorist to-day is to be found beneath the monument erected in the grounds of Childwick Bury.

The loss of this great horse, who would have been invaluable to Mr. Joel's stud, was another misfortune of that fateful year. Not long before, Jest, the dam of Humorist, worth a fortune in herself, had also died and thereby lost to Childwick Bury a brood mare who would undoubtedly have succeeded the famous Doris in the breeding of good horses.

I recollect that Mr. Joel said to me after Humorist had won the Derby :

“What a bit of luck. Now we have a horse to take the place of Sunstar.”

What bitter irony, then, both the colt and his dam should be lost in the same year. However, Mr. Joel took his misfortune in the same sporting spirit he has manifested in the face of similar adversity, and I can only hope that fitting compensation will be afforded him in the not distant future in the form of other horses equally as good.

CHAPTER IX

OF all the fascinating forms of gambling I recommend me to the buying of bloodstock. You may spend 14,000 guineas on a yearling as Lord Glanely did, only to discover to your intense mortification that the horse is practically worthless for racing purposes, whatever may be his ultimate value at the stud. Parenthetically, I might remark that the horse who does no good on the race-course but rarely achieves fame as a sire. In any case, he gets but little chance in this direction because breeders naturally fight shy of so unpromising an animal.

Mr. Jack Joel, always of a sporting spirit, spent a big sum of money in 1913 in buying that famous horse Prince Palatine. His owner, Mr. T. R. Pilkington, asked for £45,000 and after a good deal of bargaining Mr. Joel agreed to pay that price with the stipulation if the horse was beaten in the Goodwood Cup it should be reduced to £40,000.

Now the strangest part of this memorable transaction lay in the fact that Mr. Joel undertook to pay away a comfortable little fortune without ever having seen the horse! He knew, as a matter of business, that Prince Palatine would probably be worth that sum because of the money he would bring at the stud. At the time I am relating the horse stood out by himself as the finest stayer in the world.

During the afternoon at Goodwood before the race for the Cup (we were running a lot of our horses at the meeting), I happened to be with Mr. Joel when he said to me :

“As I haven’t yet seen Prince Palatine, we had better go and have a look at him before the race.”

Naturally, Cup Day at Goodwood is something like Cup Day at Ascot—it attracts half the nobility and gentry of England. This afternoon at Goodwood the parade ring was surrounded by thousands of people looking at the horses, and it was as much as Mr. Joel and I could do to get a glance at Prince Palatine. But what little he saw was quite enough for Mr. Joel.

“I don’t think much of him, do you?” he said.

“Well, handsome is as handsome does,” I replied. “Anyhow, you have bought him and there’s an end of it. We’d better go up and see how he shapes in the race.”

We made our way among the gaily dressed crowd all hastening to see the race for the Goodwood Cup. The bookmakers were asking for 5 to 2 for what seemed to be a racing certainty, but to our utter consternation Prince Palatine was beaten and Mr. Joel’s opinion of him turned out to be right. Catmint, belonging to Mr. Leonard Brasszey, did the trick, but it became obvious when the horses returned to the paddock that something had gone wrong with the champion. The late William Saxby who rode him, received a good deal of blame for being beaten, but unjustly so. Prince Palatine pulled up lame and never ran again.

But it was certainly rather galling to have bought a horse for the biggest price ever known and then to see him lose just when he is about to become your property. However, Mr. Joel took the reverse with his usual philosophy. Certainly he saved £5000 by it, but for a horse like Prince Palatine to be beaten by quite a moderate animal in Catmint was something he had not bargained for. Walking about lame, Prince Palatine looked a very dubious investment at £40,000.

“You’d better send for the horse and go on with

him," said Mr. Joel, after we had discussed the pros and cons of the matter. But when Prince Palatine reached Wantage the veterinary surgeon I called in soon disabused me of any idea of the horse running again. His leg had gone hopelessly and all I could do was to send him to Childwick Bury to take up his duties at the stud. There he remained for about four years, but he never turned out the success which his career on the Turf foreshadowed. Ultimately, Mr. Joel sold him to the Duc Decazes for £25,000. At all events, if Prince Palatine did nothing else he completely bore out Mr. Joel's opinion of not being a great horse. At the stud, although he got a few good winners, he could not be termed a first-class sire and none of his progeny even remotely approached him in point of merit.

I always looked upon him as one of those enigmatic animals who could ascend to great heights and then, for no apparent reason, descend to the deepest depths of mediocrity. He won the Ascot Gold Cup twice, in 1912 and 1913, the Eclipse Stakes in 1912, and the St. Leger in 1911, as well as many other good weight for age races. During his career he put up some very disappointing performances, and in many ways was a horse of peculiar temperament who could not be depended upon to run up to his best form. For instance, he was beaten in the Princess of Wales Stakes at Newmarket by quite a moderate animal called Lance Chest with 5 to 2 laid on him. Again, in the Jockey Club Cup at the Newmarket Houghton meeting, when the Ring asked for 20 to 1 about him, he succumbed to Aleppo when asked to give a stone to a horse he should have been able to beat without difficulty.

Even his two-year-old career looked strangely inconsistent. As I have previously mentioned, he ran in and won a little £100 plate at Kempton Park. His next outing was in the National Breeders Produce Stakes at Sandown Park, worth over £5000 to the

winning owner, which he also won. Then he turned up at Kempton Park again to run in the Imperial Produce Stakes, worth £3000, after having previously won a race at the same venue worth exactly one-thirtieth of the amount Mr. Pilkington got when he won the Produce Stakes.

But this sort of luck goes in streaks, conclusively proving that however good a horse may look, it merely comes to a matter of handsome is as handsome does. When I first went to Mr. Joel and he was looking about for horses to establish his stud, he bought that great sprinter Sundridge from Sir Samuel Scott, giving him the extremely moderate price for a good horse of 1450 guineas. Now, when you buy what you know to be a crack you are usually asking for trouble if the owner is willing to sell the animal at anything like 1450 guineas, and although I could see nothing wrong with Sundridge when I saw him at Northaw House, I surmised it would not be long before some infirmity revealed itself. I did not put him into training until some weeks after he had been purchased. Mr. Joel kept him at Potters Bar for part of the winter and did not send him to Wantage until the middle of January. The horse looked very rough in his coat, but I soon discovered when I got him out on the gallops that he was as speedy as ever. I began to feel very pleased with myself. Mr. Joel came over one day to enquire after Sundridge's welfare, to which I replied that he went like a champion and, as far as I could see, there was nothing wrong with his legs. He looked to be the cheapest horse in England.

About the middle of May Mr. Joel once more visited Wantage to see some of the horses tried, and in due course it came to Sundridge's turn to show his paces.

"How will he go?" asked Mr. Joel.

"Well," I said, "I will lay 10 to 1 he wins the gallop. There's no doubt in my mind that he is as good now and even better than before."

Off they went but, to my intense disgust, Sundridge was not only absolutely last but badly beaten off by some horses who were not in his class. It made me look rather foolish. However, such things have happened before, and after a little chaff Mr. Joel enquired what had better be done with the horse.

"He's in a race at Kempton next week," I said. "Let him run there."

Sundridge did win, beating a very smart horse belonging to Sir John Blundell Maple called Lord Bobs. He won the race in a canter, although Mr. Joel, pessimistic after what he had seen on the trial ground at Wantage, let him run unbacked.

I knew, of course, that Sundridge was a smasher; probably the fastest horse in England over five or six furlongs. He won the Royal Stakes at Epsom and King's Stand Stakes at Ascot and later, got beaten a short head in the Portland Plate carrying a prohibitive weight. It may probably be that this in-and-out form had been responsible for Sir Samuel Scott letting him go so cheaply, but Mornington Cannon, who rode him in most of his races, could never understand why he had ever been sold. He was certainly the cheapest horse in England.

I discovered afterwards that Sundridge used to jar himself slightly, although the trouble did not reveal itself until he had won several good races. All at once he fell lame. I immediately set to work with a primitive method of curing lame horses. I used to get some cabbage leaves, put them on Sundridge's bad leg, and tie a bandage over them. The next morning he would be as sound as a bell. The leaves set up an acute perspiration which takes all the lameness out of a horse's joints far more efficaciously than all the patent remedies in the world. Certainly it made it possible to keep Sundridge in training, and over a matter of two years I won many more races with him. Carrying prohibitive weights, he beat all the best sprinters in the country, and I was only sorry

that he made his final appearance on the racecourse unsuccessfully.

We had many exciting adventures with the horse. In the Stewards Cup of 1903 Horatio Bottomley ran third with Le Blizon, Sundridge being fourth, Mr. Joel's horse giving the other something like two stone. Mornington Cannon said that as a result of a long delay at the post Sundridge became very indifferent and failed to jump off with his customary alacrity. But, following this, in the De Warrenne Handicap at Lewes, which winds up the Sussex Fortnight, Sundridge made a common hack of Bottomley's horse.

The redoubtable Horatio was not altogether pleased and challenged Mr. Joel to a match, to be run at the Stewards Cup weights. Intense excitement took place over this great duel. The stakes were £500 a side and a gold cup as a trophy. The late Mr. Joseph Davis, the secretary of the Hurst Park Race Club, always on the lookout for a needle match, got the contest, and on the day it took place the attendance at Hurst Park broke all records.

Le Blizon won, but how it happened I don't know to this day. Young James Hare, who afterwards became Bottomley's trainer, rode his horse on this occasion, while we had Mornington Cannon on Sundridge. Ours was the favourite at 2 to 1 on. Never in my life have I seen such betting; hundreds of thousands of pounds were at stake with all the big backers plunging on Sundridge. Cannon could never understand the result. He remarked to me that there was something radically wrong after the way Sundridge had beaten Le Blizon at Lewes. However, horse-racing is full of these inconsistencies.

In many ways Sundridge was one of the most curious horses I have ever known. When I used to saddle him in the paddock, he would hang his head in listless fashion as though taking not the slightest interest in the proceedings. One would imagine him

to be the most tired animal in the world. But what a difference in the race itself!

When Sundridge finished his racing career—he got beaten at Newmarket in his last race by that very good horse Delaunay—he went to the stud at the very modest fee of nine guineas. Handicappers who have had a busy time on the Turf do not usually get a great deal of patronage until some good winners come along. However, Sundridge soon showed himself to be a champion in more senses of the word than one, and before many years were out Mr. Joel found breeders tumbling over one another at 300 guineas for his services.

He must have sired hundreds of winners, notable among the few I can recollect being Sunstar, that smashing good horse Sunder, our dual Classic winner Jest, Happy Warrior, Lady Josephine, Sunningdale, Sunflower II, Sunspot, Dolly Vardon, Bright, Sun Angel, Sunny Land, and dozens of others. It was also more than a little extraordinary that although Sundridge contracted a chill one winter and turned a bit of a roarer it did not affect his form on the race-course, nor did he transmit the ailment to any of his progeny.

One of the best fillies he ever sired, Silver Tag, looks like developing into one of the finest brood mares of all time, while others descended from him, particularly Golden Sun and Sunstar, have been among the leading sires of the last few years. Parhelion, Sunfire, Radiant, Sun Yat, White Star, and many more bred at the Childwick Bury stud all pay tribute to Sundridge's excellence. When Sundridge dropped out Sunstar came on the scene and had a notable run of success right up to his death.

Even greater is the romance surrounding St. Simon. By Galopin-St. Angela, he belonged to a Hungarian, Prince Batthyany, who dropped dead at Newmarket in the early eighties and thereby rendered all St. Simon's Classic engagements void. Nobody ever

knew how good St. Simon was. I recollect seeing him beating a first-class three-year-old by no less than twenty lengths and there was not a horse in England who could extend him. He became the property of the Duke of Portland and at the stud got more winners than has ever been known before or since. All over the world the descendants of St. Simon are still winning races, and, one way and another, he must have earned the Duke of Portland the better part of £250,000. To-day forty years after this champion of champions finished his racing career, one will find his name in the pedigrees of all the cracks. It is impossible to estimate the money his progeny have won. And yet, if my memory does not play me false, the Duke of Portland bought him for the trifling sum of 1600 guineas, which only goes to prove my contention that money does not necessarily command success on the Turf.

It falls upon a horse who succeeded St. Simon as the Champion of England, the notable Ormonde, to provide a striking illustration of the reverse side of the fascinating pastime of buying bloodstock. Here was an animal who had won the Triple Crown, acclaimed by all and sundry—and still acclaimed by many—as the greatest horse of all time. I saw him win all his races, and there can be no doubt that he was indeed a super-horse.

When the late Duke of Westminster decided to retire him from the Turf, he took up his duties at the stud but proved to be singularly unproductive. A few good winners, notably Orme, paid tribute to his excellence but, in the main, there seemed little reason to doubt that Ormonde was a failure. He did not get many foals and breeders soon tired of him. The Duke thereupon sold him to a Spaniard for, I think, 12,000 guineas, which brings to me an extraordinary incident which happened in the middle nineties when I was training the horses of the redoubtable "Boss" Croker.

Among the "Boss's" many friends who came down to Wantage to stay with him was a very charming man named Charlie Read. Tall, of distinguished appearance, I never came across a more handsome man in my life. He looked more like the picture one sees of those aristocratic old Kentucky colonels who laid the foundation stone of America's civilization. He candidly admitted to me that he had been born a gambler.

"And a gambler I shall die," he added.

He and another American named John Morrissey were the founders of the Saratoga Race Club, which they made a fashionable resort and incidentally gave the rich Americans the opportunity of gambling to their heart's content. Then, one day, Charlie Read, who knew all about horses, heard that Ormonde was for sale. The Spaniard who had bought him from the Duke of Westminster wanted to make a profit and offered the horse for £30,000.

"I thought it the chance of a lifetime," Read told me as he related the story. "Never before in the history of the world had there been such a wonderful horse and I straightaway made up my mind that all the money I had would be spent on Ormonde. But," he went on, "I could not raise £30,000. All that I possessed was between £26,000 and £27,000. Nevertheless, I went to see Ormonde's owner in Texas and told him point-blank that I had come to buy the horse."

"The price is £30,000," he told me. "I pulled out all the money in my possession, £26,000 worth of currency notes, a bag of gold, all my loose silver, leaving myself with nothing but a bunch of keys. I laid it all on the table in front of him."

"Now," I said to him, "I have come thousands of miles to do this deal. It is everything I have got in the world. Will you take it? It's ready money and you might never get such a chance again. The horse might die or anything might happen."

"But," Read told me, "the Spaniard utterly

refused to sell below £30,000, and as I had little or no prospect of getting more I had to go back to Saratoga without Ormonde."

He went on to tell me that throughout his life as a professional gambler he had experienced all sorts of luck, some diabolically bad, some unbelievably good. In Ormonde's case his lucky star proved to be in the ascendant. Someone bought the horse for the sum wanted and he turned out to be the rankest failure ever known in the history of the American Turf.

"Now," Read went on, "I have told you about some of my good luck. I'll tell you another about bad luck. I bought St. Blaise (who won the Derby for Sir Frederick Johnstone in 1883) when they put him up for auction at Tattersall's Sale Ring in New York. I always had a passion for gambling in horses and I thought I might get a fortune out of this one. I knew, of course, that the reserve was £20,000, but when the auctioneer put the horse up there was only one bid for him. That, unluckily for me, as it subsequently turned out, happened to be mine. They knocked him down to me and I took him away. Shortly afterwards the stables where I kept him caught fire and he was burnt to death without my ever getting a penny back."

One year at Newmarket I met Charlie Read on the July Course and stopped chatting with him for some little time. Later in the afternoon one of my friends came to me and said :

"I saw you talking to Charlie Read. How did you come to know him?"

I naturally thought that I would be given a warning to be careful of a man who was admittedly a great gambler, so I replied that I had met him through "Boss" Croker. But I received a great surprise.

"Well," remarked my friend, "I only wanted to tell you that Read is one of the best men that ever lived and one of nature's gentlemen."

It caused me most intense grief when he died.



LEADING IN HUMORIST, WINSER OF DERRY, 1941

Whatever his sins he will meet them in the same gallant spirit that he met all his other ups and downs, always smiling, never complaining.

The stories I could tell about expensive horses worth, to be quite precise, one shilling! When I was in Newmarket in 1890 training for "Abington" Baird, he happened to hear of a supposedly good horse for sale. Said "The Squire," with that knowing air he was fond of assuming occasionally:

"Old Harry Hall (a well-known trainer of those days) has a horse called Quartus which he wants me to buy."

"What's he asking for him?" I enquired.

"Six thousand guineas."

"That's a lot of money," I said.

"The Squire" agreed.

"But what does it matter," he remarked, "if it is a good horse."

Well, Baird eventually bought Quartus and had him sent to Bedford Lodge. He had been entered in some of the Spring Handicaps and among others the City and Suburban, which was generally supposed to be a gift for him. The City and Suburban is a race of which I know something; I have won it myself several times and this particular year I had three or four horses of Baird's in the race.

When Quartus arrived I found him quite sound, big, and everything that a horse should be. He moved very well, and when I had got him thoroughly fit I tried him on the Limekilns, never for one moment expecting what actually happened. I had practically all the best jockeys in England engaged in the trial, Tom Cannon, Sam and Tom Loates, Jack Watts, and one or two more. Also, the trial tackle could hardly have been better. I had Pioneer, who just about represented top Classic form, a famous filly named Lady Rosebery, Father Confessor, whose exploits speak for themselves, and a very smart sprinter named Snaplock.

Our 6000 guinea purchase not only finished absolutely last—he was tailed right off. Tom Loates rode him and told me he simply declined to do anything. He had gone fairly well for a time and then dropped right out of it.

“Perhaps he doesn’t stay,” I said. “I’ll try him over a shorter distance.”

I took the brute back to Bedford Lodge having a pretty good idea that “The Squire” had put his foot into it this time. Six thousand guineas is plenty of money even for a millionaire. I tried Quartus over a mile and he again finished last. I sent him over six furlongs and he still brought up the rear. On each occasion he could not have been more fit and well and I ultimately came to the conclusion that four and a half furlongs was just about the best he could manage. The only thing to do was to put him in a selling race, a nice descent for a horse who had cost us 6000 guineas only a few weeks previously.

“The Squire,” on being duly informed by me, naturally gave vent to a good deal of annoyance and went off hot-foot to tell Harry Hall what he thought of him. It must have been something pretty bad, because Harry came over to Bedford Lodge nearly crying.

“I can’t understand it,” he wailed. “I never trained a better horse in my life.”

“Well,” I retorted, “I never trained a worse one.”

We left it at that and ultimately Quartus made his appearance in a mile selling race at Newmarket. He caused me unbounded amazement by winning, and after the race several people came to me to enquire if I wanted the horse back.

“Not me,” I replied.

So the wretched animal was knocked down to for, I think, 1200 guineas.

After the race, the late Robert Peck, father of the present trainers, and one of the finest judges of a

horse I have ever known, came up to me in the Birdcage and said :

“ You’ve done a clever thing. You have let a damned good horse go.”

“ Have I ? ” I enquired. “ Well, I don’t think so.”

“ If he isn’t a good horse, I’m a very bad judge,” said Peck, to which I modestly replied that his opinion was undoubtedly worth more than mine and therefore I must be the bad judge. Everybody at Newmarket thought I had made a fool of myself and as time went on Quartus was entered in the Cambridgeshire. Quartus’s trainer was James Waugh, the father of the four brothers now at Newmarket, a highly agreeable, good-looking, cultured man, and one of the ablest trainers in the country. He confirmed Peck’s opinion of Quartus being a good one and as the Cambridgeshire drew nigh the horse gradually came into the betting, first at 33 to 1, then 20 to 1, then 100 to 8, and finally favourite at 10 to 1.

Bob Lee, one of the biggest bookmakers of his time and a man who betted a lot of money on future events, told me one day :

“ There’s a lot of money for that horse you used to have. I am told he will win the Cambridgeshire.”

“ Are you ? ” I replied. “ Well, I know he will not.”

“ All right, Charles,” replied Bob more humbly. “ You ought to know.”

Evidently the news got round a bit. A day or two afterwards I had a visit from George Dobell, evidently in a somewhat perturbed state of mind.

“ Look here,” he said, “ I’m told you don’t fancy Quartus.”

“ He hasn’t got a thousand-to-one chance,” I told him, coming down to more practical figures.

“ Waugh tells me he will win.”

“ I know he won’t,” I replied.

It seemed I was to have a visit from everyone

concerned with this infernal animal. That same night James Waugh, the trainer of the horse, came along, no doubt infected by the alarming intelligence. Said James rather wrathfully :

“ Mr. Dobell told me you think Quartus has no chance of winning the Cambridgeshire. I think he will win. I haven't tried him yet, but I shall be very much mistaken if he doesn't do what I ask him. I'm going to try him to-morrow and I'll let you know what happens.”

“ You needn't bother to tell me,” I said as he went off.

Quartus, I might say, was then a hot favourite for the Cambridgeshire at 100 to 15, but I advised everybody who asked me about the horse to have nothing to do with him. On the following day when I was out with my second string of horses about twelve o'clock, Waugh came rushing up to me on his hack.

“ By jove,” he cried, “ you were right. I've tried the brute and he isn't worth a shilling. I have never been so mistaken about a horse in all my life.”

“ Yes,” I said, “ I know that. I've had some.”

The next day they struck Quartus out of the Cambridgeshire and I never heard of him again. He was wrongly named. He should have been called Caught Us—not Quartus.

There is no doubt about the part that luck plays in the buying of horses. At the Newmarket December sales in 1899 an animal named Royal Flush was in the list to be sold and I remarked to Mr. Sibary, for whom I trained a few horses at the time, that it was probably worth buying. I knew something about this animal. I had it in my mind that he had never been properly trained. However, it was one of those very long sale days when the Newmarket stables are weeding out and about half-past five Mr. Sibary got rather tired of waiting for Royal Flush to come under the hammer. He wanted to catch a train leaving about six o'clock and told me to stop if I liked. He had to go whatever

happened. So I went with him to catch the train, and when we reached Liverpool Street I bought a paper, where I saw that Royal Flush had been knocked down for 450 guineas.

“ You see that,” I remarked to Mr. Sibary. “ He has been sold to Gates and Drake (a couple of well-known Americans). You’ll soon see what they will do with him. He is a horse that has never had a chance and Wishard (their trainer) will work wonders with him.”

Nor was I mistaken. Wishard, a clever man at his business, speedily made Royal Flush a champion sprinter. He won a £1000 handicap with the horse in the early part of the season and followed that up by winning the Royal Hunt Cup and the Stewards Cup. I believe Gates and Drake won something like £100,000 with the animal. They afterwards matched him with Eager, the fastest horse of that time, but he got beaten.

When you buy a horse for the stud you are simply taking a dip into the lucky bag of the game. It does not necessarily follow that because an animal wins good races he will be equally successful as a sire. I could mention hundreds of cases which clearly prove what a gamble it is. Not long before the war Sol Green, the most famous bookmaker in Australia, cabled to Mr. Joel to ask what he wanted for White Star. Of course, the horse had done very well. As a two-year-old he had been right at the top of the tree and in the two following seasons his performances warranted the belief that he would be very valuable for the stud. Mr. Green, of course, is a wealthy man and breeds on a very big scale. At that particular time we had not much use for another sire at Childwick Bury and when Mr. Joel asked my advice about the matter I said it would be a good plan to sell.

“ What shall I ask for him ? ” said Mr. Joel. “ Five thousand guineas ? ”

“ Make it six thousand while you are about it,” I

said. He is easily worth it and you won't lose the sale for the sake of the extra thousand."

I had trouble and enough to spare before White Star could be shipped to Australia. Before a horse can be sent to the Colonies you must have him tested for glanders, and obtain a certificate from a veterinary surgeon that he is free from the disease. I called in the "vet" merely as a matter of form, glanders being practically unknown amongst horses in this country. He duly made the Malline test and to my intense consternation informed me a few days later that White Star undoubtedly showed symptoms of the disease.

"Well, that's a nice how-do-you-do," I said to him. "How on earth could a horse get glanders in a stable like mine? They are cleaned out twice a day and I'll swear you won't find a speck of dirt in any of them. Besides, who ever heard of a racehorse getting glanders? You must be wrong."

"I'm certain I'm not," retorted the "vet," "but if you like I'll bring another man."

The second "vet" duly made his appearance, and confirmed the other man's opinion. But even then I would not believe them. When you have had forty or fifty years' experience of racehorses you naturally learn just as much about their ailments as most veterinary surgeons. The point was that I had to have the certificate before White Star could be sent to Australia. It did not particularly worry either Mr. Joel or myself whether we sold White Star. What caused me many a sleepless night was the thought that if I did have glanders in the stable it would be necessary to shoot all the horses. At that time I had in training something like £100,000 worth of blood-stock. So I had no intention of accepting the debatable opinion of any veterinary surgeon.

The horse appeared to have nothing the matter with him, and in desperation I sent for Professor Sir John MacFadyen, the head of the Veterinary College, who at my special request came down to

Wantage and in company with four other men examined White Star and once more tested him for glanders. The Professor confirmed the opinion I had always held and told me it was nothing but a slight reaction occasionally to be found after these tests. I eventually received the certificate I wanted and White Star went to the land of the Southern Cross. After all this trouble, it would have been fitting for me to add that he turned out an immense success. Instead of which he did no credit whatever to his illustrious parentage and his great deeds as a racehorse.

Much about the same time we sold another of our horses, Absurd, to go to the stud in far-off New Zealand. Mr. Joel disposed of him very cheaply, and there is no doubt, as bloodstock goes to-day, that he was one of the greatest bargains of modern times. He has since sired hundreds of winners, and if he had remained in England there is no knowing what manner of fame he might have acquired.

CHAPTER X

IF I were asked to name the cleverest men the Turf has known in the last fifty years, the late Robert Peck, the father of the present trainers, John Hammond, and the late Captain Machell, would be my choice.

Robert Peck I always looked upon as one of the most picturesque figures of his time. He had been a trainer of horses from birth and his father before him. No more able man ever controlled a big racing stable, and for many years he successfully trained for the late Duke of Westminster during the golden period when the Grosvenor colours were sweeping all before them.

As a matter of fact, Robert Peck actually started the Duke racing. He bought a famous horse named Doncaster who had won the Derby in 1873, and the Ascot Gold Cup and Alexandra Plate two years later, giving the owner, Mr. Merry, £10,000 for the horse and reselling it to the Duke for £14,000. As near as I can remember, Robert already had his buyer when he purchased Doncaster, but nevertheless the horse turned out a wonderful bargain. From Doncaster the Duke bred the celebrated Bend Or, who won the Derby in 1880, while Bend Or in his turn bred the great Ormonde, with whom the Duke won the Triple Crown in 1886. Ormonde got Orme, who in his turn produced another renowned champion in Flying Fox, the winner of the Derby in the Duke's colours in 1899.

Robert Peck takes very high rank with the men who have made the English thoroughbred all-supreme. Always immaculately dressed, sprightly, and alert of mind, his was indeed a notable character. A more

I have already related a few experiences with John Hammond, but there is another man who has also achieved a considerable amount of fame in more recent times. This is that very capable Newmarket trainer, Captain Bewicke, who has pulled off many big coups in his time. I recollect some few years ago he put a two-year-old in a selling race at Sandown Park and backed it to win thousands of pounds. Of course, it was a good horse and Captain Bewicke badly wanted it back. But unfortunately for him, "Boss" Croker happened to be at Sandown Park that day and, money being no object to him if he wanted anything, he determined to buy the winner.

Captain Bewicke was also of the same mind, but Croker knew nothing about this and simply went on nodding to the auctioneer without worrying about the price. The bidding had begun at 300 guineas and by tens it went up and up until it reached 1600 guineas. Captain Bewicke himself had not bothered to be present, little dreaming that the "Boss" would ever want his horse. But the individual deputed to buy it in soon discovered to his intense dismay that he had a millionaire to fight, furthermore, a man who did not care what anything cost him so long as he got it.

It proved to be an exciting little drama. The "Boss," cigar stuck firmly in the corner of his mouth, capped every bid of Bewicke's representative with another "tenner," and so it went up each bidding 10 guineas a time until an enormous crowd had congregated around the Ring. Everybody pressed in to see the duel. Croker went on, enjoying himself immensely, and when the horse had reached 1600 guineas, the auctioneer, having a pretty shrewd idea

in his head that there might be complications, knocked the horse down to him.

Then the fun began. When Captain Bewicke ascertained what had happened he got hold of Charles Mills, the well-known commission agent, who knew Croker well, and asked him to induce the "Boss" to let him have his horse back but, as I have already indicated, the "Boss" rather liked to have things his own way. Would he re-sell it? Not for a million pounds.

"No," he said to Mills, "I guess I'll keep it. I shan't run it here. I'll send it over to America."

Mills offered him 2000 guineas, but Croker only laughed at him and walked off still chewing on his cigar. Nor did Captain Bewicke ever get his horse. The "Boss" kept to his word and it went across the Atlantic, leaving Captain Bewicke to mourn its departure.

Selling-plate gambles are right enough in their way, but I doubt whether they pay in the long run. Mr. J. C. Galstaun, the Armenian, used to make a practice of coming over here during the summer and backing two-year-olds to win him a fortune in a seller. There were occasions when everything came his way, but the balance must have been on the wrong side at the finish. Selling races are for the purpose of enabling owners to get rid of bad horses, but very often people utilize them simply to gamble in a manner that leaves very little to chance. They will put a good horse in a race where it has nothing to beat and, provided the coup has been cleverly worked, they may win £20,000 on the race. Unless they do bet heavily the buying-in is likely to be an expensive process.

Bob Sievier has been easily the pluckiest plunger we have known for many years. For a long time he could do no wrong. He made a small fortune in the late nineties when an Australian horse named The Grafter won the City and Suburban and, following up his luck, went on to win huge sums when the peerless

Sceptre was sweeping all before her. Nobody but himself can know the thousands of pounds that have been through his hands. Bob, unlike many celebrated backers, never believed in buttoning up. When luck came his way he not only betted more heavily than ever but staked practically everything on his horses.

I first made his acquaintance in the early nineties not long after he had returned from Australia and, naturally, soon came to know well the man who charmed everybody he met by his bonhomie and fascinating personality. The years went on and subsequently, in circumstances I have already related, I trained his horses at Wantage.

Innumerable were the adventures we underwent. Often would we be on the flood-tide of success, then on the rocks of desperation, through misguidedly backing horses that ought to have won. One night at the Queen's Hotel in Manchester after a prolonged sitting at cards in which Charles Mills, Bob Sievier, and someone else whom I have forgotten, took part, we finished up about eight o'clock in the morning. The day previously Bob had bought a plater named Craræ for 560 guineas—I was then training his horses—and had made arrangements overnight to have the horse sent home in company with some other animals I had bought. Tired out for want of sleep, I hied myself to bed at the time when most people are doing exactly the reverse, intending to stop there. We had nothing running that day and I much preferred a little hard-earned rest to any racing.

Before I could get properly settled down, Bob, *en route* to the races, came into my room.

"That horse will win to-day," he said, meaning Craræ.

"No, he won't," I muttered.

"Why?"

"Because I have sent him home."

"Can't you telegraph for him to be sent back?"

"No, I can't, I want to go to sleep."

"Well, you're a nice adjectival trainer," replied Bob, banging the door somewhat unnecessarily as he went out. He and Charlie Mills went off to the races and came back after having a very bad day, which was not improved when I enquired why they had not done as I did—had a good sound sleep.

I will give Bob his due. He would take the most amazing chances in the world and turn up the ace of trumps every time. One day at Newmarket races, in company with Tom Vigers, the Irish correspondent of the old *Sportsman*, he saw a two-year-old win a race in brilliant style. I don't know whether Bob's finances were particularly strong at the time, but he immediately took a violent fancy to the horse and made up his mind to have it.

"By Jove, that's a good horse," he remarked to Tom. "One of the best I have ever seen."

"Musker (to whom the horse belonged) might sell him," said Vigers.

"Go and ask him if he will."

Tom sought out James Musker (the principal proprietor of the Home & Colonial Stores and also a big breeder of bloodstock), but Musker would not sell.

"Have another go at him," said Bob, and Tom kept at it until eventually Musker agreed to sell for the somewhat staggering figure of 10,000 guineas. Did that deter Bob? Not a bit of it.

"Right, I'll pay him ten thousand," he said, and was as good at his word. Tom arranged a meeting between buyer and seller to pay over the money. Bob turned up with twenty-one £500 notes, and when he had handed the money over said to Musker:

"You ought to give him," meaning his friend Tom, "one of those."

"Oh, no," replied Musker, "You give him something."

"Me!" retorted Bob. "I've given you a wonderful price for your horse and you ought to let Tom have a 'monkey' out of it."

"All right," said Musker, unwillingly peeling off one of the notes and handing it over.

Act 2 in this interesting affair opened in my house at Wantage when I received a wire from Bob saying :

"Have bought the best two-year-old I have ever seen in my life. Come and see it to-morrow. Will meet you in town."

Highly interested, I went up and met Bob, who after giving me friendly greeting, imparted the news.

"Look here," he said, "I want you to go down to Thetford with me, and if you don't think this horse is the best two-year-old you have ever seen, you can call me a Dutchman."

"Now," he went on, "I don't want you to crab the horse, because I have bought and paid for him, whether you like him or not. All I want you to do is to confirm my opinion."

So far, so good. Down we went to Thetford and Gilbert, Mr. Musker's trainer, showed us the horse.

"There you are," said Bob. "What do you think of him? Isn't he a beauty?"

Well, if size went for anything the horse was indeed a champion. Never have I seen such an enormous two-year-old. Although very early in the season—it was then May—he stood fully 16.3 hands. I could only just reach the top of him. However, he seemed perfectly sound and I informed the expectant Bob that I thought him a very nice colt.

"Yes, I know that," said Bob. "But do you like him?" with the accent on the "you."

I always tell the truth whenever it is possible, but this was one of those occasions when tact would be infinitely preferable.

"Well," I replied, "he's all right now, but what is he going to be this time next year? The chances are that he will turn out a roarer."

"That's right," exclaimed Bob disgustedly. "I knew you would crab him. Anyhow, what does it matter? I have paid for him."

“He may be the best horse ever seen,” I remarked, anxious to smooth things over a little.

“Ah, that’s what I wanted you to say.” And so we left it at that.

The animal I am referring to was named Toddington, and the first engagement made for him was in the Woodcote Stakes at Epsom. We arranged to try the horse with the plater Crarae, and Bob came down to Wantage bringing Sam Loates, Willie Lane, and one or two other jockeys.

“How shall we try these horses?” he asked me when he arrived.

“Even weights,” I replied.

“Even weights! Why, confound it, that’s not fair.”

“Well,” I said, “you have given 10,000 guineas for this horse. If he can’t beat a plater at even weights he isn’t worth it. You surely don’t want to try him at weight for age with a horse like Crarae?”

The trial duly took place and Crarae won.

“You’ve asked the colt to do too much,” said Bob.

“Not me,” I said. “The trouble is you have given far too much for the horse. However, that won’t stop him winning the Woodcote Stakes.”

I took both horses to Epsom. Crarae was entered in two races on the first day and Toddington, of course, in the Woodcote Stakes. Bob came along to see me, asked after the horses, and in which race we should run Crarae. One of them was a handicap, the other a seller.

“He’s sure to win the selling race, but he isn’t certain to win the handicap,” I said.

“But how can I get him back?” asked Bob.

“That’s easily done,” I replied. “Back him for enough money. Anyway, if he runs in the selling race put me £300 on him, and nothing if he runs in the other.”

Bob, like a wise man, took his trainer’s advice. Crarae ran in the selling race, carrying £5000 belonging to his owner and £300 of mine and, being a faithful

animal fully alive to his responsibilities, did his duty. Then Toddington won the Woodcote Stakes in a canter with Bob having another plunge. The following day he gambled thousands of pounds on Diamond Jubilee to win the Derby, once more finding himself victorious. On the Saturday at Kempton Park both Crarac and Toddington won again with Bob playing up his winnings. Toddington won a £1000 race, but, unfortunately, it proved to be his last appearance on a racecourse. He returned to the paddock all right, and I was just going away when my head man came running after me to inform me that Toddington had broken down. He could not tell me how it had happened. The horse was sweating badly, and subsequent examination by a veterinary surgeon disclosed the fact that he had split a pastern.

Bob's winnings that week were something like £53,000. Naturally, he was in high fettle, and when he went on the following year to dominate the two-year-old situation with Sceptre, Duke of Westminster, and Lavengro, it seemed as though there were no stopping him.

Sceptre also made her first appearance in the Woodcote Stakes when Bob, who never lacked financial courage where his own horses were concerned, had another plunge. It came off, and when the filly again appeared on a racecourse, this time in the July Stakes at Newmarket, Bob laid the odds to the tune of thousands of pounds.

Sceptre got beaten in the Champagne Stakes by Game Chick, who had previously been beaten by Duke of Westminster in the Richmond Stakes at Goodwood. Now it clearly reveals the uncertainty of the game that Sceptre should have gone under to an animal not in the same class, but she ought never to have run in the race. At Goodwood, Huggins, the American trainer, who had Game Chick, thought he had a great chance of beating Duke of Westminster, but luckily for Bob and I we got Danny Maher to ride

and he beat Lester Reiff on Game Chick by the aid of the most consummate jockeyship I have ever seen.

Duke of Westminster was certainly no champion and I am going on to relate a story which proves how canny one must be in anything appertaining to race-horses. The Duke had jarred himself when he won the Richmond Stakes and I informed his owner, with whom I stayed at Goodwood, that he would be unable to run in the Molecomb Stakes. Anyhow, we had a couple of days to see what happened, but the colt did not get any better. Bob was bitterly disappointed and wanted to know if the horse could not possibly be got fit to run. We had quite a prolonged argument about the matter. I pointed out as emphatically as I could that it was impossible to run the horse, but I don't think Bob believed me.

"Why," he said, "he has nothing to beat."

"Anything can beat a lame horse," I replied.

But still hoping against hope, Bob had Duke of Westminster taken to the course.

"I can't see anything wrong with him," he remarked.

"Maybe not," I said. "He is worth a lot of money now, but if you run him in this race he will be useless."

Evidently that aspect of the matter had not struck Bob. He gave way and eventually sold Duke of Westminster to John Porter for 20,000 guineas, which was probably considerably more than he was worth. The redoubtable John, who ought to have known better, chose Duke of Westminster in preference to Sceptre, all of which goes to prove the inestimable virtue of keeping a horse unbeaten. If Duke of Westminster had run in the Molecomb Stakes and broken down, as would certainly have happened, he would not have fetched 2000 guineas in the open market.

Towards the end of the 1901 season, when Bob's three juveniles overshadowed everything else, I happened to be at Hurst Park one day when the late Sir Ernest Cassel called me over and wanted to know

whether I thought Mr. Sievier would take an offer for Sceptre, Duke of Westminster, and Lavengro. Sir Ernest, a millionaire of course, confidentially asked me if I thought Mr. Sievier would sell. I did not. If there is one thing that Bob will not do, it is to dispose of a good horse. Only a long spell of bad luck would ever induce him to relinquish the ownership of any first-class animal, and there is no doubt that he bore a deep affection for the trio of two-year-olds who had done so much to make his name famous throughout the world.

“Offer him £50,000,” said Sir Ernest Cassel.

I did not particularly fancy the job but at any rate, seeing Bob standing by the weighing-room, I went over to him and repeated the offer.

“You go and tell him to go to a slightly warmer place than Hurst Park,” replied Bob. “I am not selling my horses to him or anyone else.”

So I returned, repeated Bob’s message minus one or two of the more important words, and was instructed to make the offer £60,000. Clearly, decisively, and picturesquely did he inform me that the horses were not for sale, after which, as they say in the House of Commons, the incident ended.

Without a doubt Bob has been one of the pluckiest—as well as the luckiest—plungers ever known. One particular occasion I remember well, he intended running some horses at Doncaster and had invited a house party for the occasion. Coming back with the horses from exercise I went into his bedroom to tell him the news when he showed me a letter which he had accidentally opened. As a matter of fact, it was addressed to a well-known bookmaker, and how it had happened amongst Bob’s letters nobody ever discovered. It contained important news for a racing man. Written by a stable lad in the employ of Mr. W. G. Stevens of Compton, a well-known man who has since joined the great majority, it disclosed that a horse called King’s Lynn, trained by Mr. Stevens,

would win the Scarborough Stakes. The boy wanted the modest sum of £2 for the intelligence.

“What do you think of that?” enquired Bob.

The favourite for the race was Santoi, a celebrated stayer belonging to Mr. George Edwardes of Gaiety Theatre fame. In the vernacular, it looked a racing certainty. But Santoi was not worth backing. The Ring asked for 5 to 2 and Bob, after having had a good look at King's Lynn, proceeded to have a few hundreds on the outsider. And what must he do but go up to the bookmaker to whom the letter had been addressed and asked him what price he would lay about King's Lynn!

I think Bob took 100 to 7 to quite a lot of money and, as is only fitting, King's Lynn won in a canter.

For many years I trained horses for a great-hearted Irishman with whom I have always been on terms of the closest friendship. This was Mr. Martin Fitzgerald, the proprietor of *The Freeman's Journal*. Even when I took over Mr. Joel's horses I stipulated that I should still be allowed to keep a few for Mr. Fitzgerald. I knew him back in the early nineties when, like myself, he was considerably younger, and although he has never gone in for the sport in a big way he has always kept a few animals in training.

There are all sorts of extraordinary people who buy racehorses some time or another in their life and Martin Fitzgerald had one for a partner. Hamilton Edwardes was his name. He had previously been a partner of the late Lord Northcliffe in some of his journalistic ventures and, after being bought out for something like £150,000, went over to Ireland and acquired an interest in *The Freeman's Journal*.

Martin must have fired him with the ambition to make another fortune on the Turf. At all events, he came over from Ireland specially to back a horse named Achushla belonging to his partner. I was

running the animal in a race at Epsom and greatly fancied his chance. The horse did not win; he ran a dead heat with something or other, evidently not to Mr. Edwardes' satisfaction. He came to me after the race and said :

“ Do you think that was fair ? ”

“ What ? ”

“ Why, only running a dead heat. The horse ought to have won.”

Well, I have had to deal with a good many extraordinary people in my time but I had never before come across anyone capable of believing that any jockey could deliberately make a dead heat of a race. Besides, who would know how the judge would decide? Afterwards, I ascertained how it had all come about. It seemed that Mr. Edwardes had heard that Steve Donoghue, who rode Acushla, had been asked to take the ride on another horse in the same race, and unfortunately, the one with which he had dead-heated! Cock-fighting is not in it.

It was also Acushla who was responsible for a dramatic little episode which took place at Windsor a few months later. I intended running the horse in a moderate handicap, which he looked sure to win, when a well-known backer came to me in desperate plight.

“ I'll have to take the knock,” he said to me. “ For God's sake tell me if Acushla will win. There's just a chance I may be able to get out.”

“ If he doesn't win, I'll shoot him,” I replied.

Anyhow, this particular individual went up and down the rails backing Acushla for pounds, shillings, and pence. Fortunately he won, otherwise he would not be on the racecourse to-day.

CHAPTER XI

AMONG the many personalities who have enlivened our Turf in the last thirty or forty years few stand out more clearly than the redoubtable "Boss" Croker, who came to England in the early nineties in circumstances which made his name well known throughout the world. For many years he had ruled New York and his headquarters, Tammany Hall, were a synonym whenever political methods were under discussion.

The "Boss" arrived here with plenty of money to spend and very little work to occupy his time. So he decided to take up racing and, as everybody expected, did so in his usual thorough manner. But instead of buying his horses here, as most Americans do, he brought them over from the United States and entrusted me with the somewhat onerous task of winning races with them. Most men would have been content to acknowledge the superiority of the English thoroughbred; not so the "Boss." He possessed a friend named Baldwin who had horses to sell and he bought the lot *en bloc*.

Time after time has it been clearly proved that American horses will do little or no good in this country. A short while after "Boss" Croker had made his appearance on our Turf, the American invasion proper took place. The Whitneys, a wealthy American family, not only brought over dozens of more or less valuable animals from their native land, but also installed their own trainers here. And thus, for a time, the Americans made a great stir, if not for long. The racing conditions here did not suit the

horses and, to be quite candid, they were a long way behind ours in every conceivable way.

We have had a good many American sportsmen racing in this country since the time I am relating, but most of them have wisely confined their ownership to English and French horses. It has been conclusively proved in dozens of notable instances that valuable horses never properly acclimatize when transported thousands of miles away. They may do well enough at the stud, but for racing purposes it is infinitely more profitable to buy the native product. The numerous American millionaires who run horses both here and in France never bother now about bringing animals from the United States. "Boss" Croker showed them the fatuity of ousting the British thoroughbred with horses reared and trained for nothing but speed.

Croker, a shrewd judge of human nature, if ever there was one in this world, fixed upon me as the person who might successfully exploit his intention of showing the British public what American horses could do. Charles Mills acted as intermediary and, to clinch the bargain, succeeded in selling Croker a place called "The Moat House" which he had bought from Fred Lynham, the well-known trainer. Thereupon I found myself installed in the neighbourhood I had known since my boyhood days after five or six years at the headquarters of racing.

It is to be doubted whether the "Boss" altogether approved of the way I trained his horses. Years of autocratic rule at Tammany Hall had accustomed him to everything he wanted, and I think he found it rather difficult to understand why the innumerable American horses he brought here did not carry everything before them. It was only after being clearly convinced that his quadrupeds from the U.S.A. were not good enough that he abandoned the battle and founded the Glencairn Stud in Ireland, where he subsequently bred his Derby winner Orby.

I began operations for the "Boss" with a batch of Yankee yearlings—twenty of them. At the best of times it is an unthankful task nursing four-legged babies, and Croker's importations soon revealed their limitations. Two or three of them won some six furlong races, but it did not take me long to discover that I was wasting my time with them.

When the "Boss" reluctantly agreed with my verdict and wanted to know what should be done, I told him to sell them for anything he could get. A friend of mine, of a speculative turn of mind, adopted the lot and, strange to say, succeeded in winning a few races with them. Said the "Boss":

"This is a bit strange. They couldn't win any races for me."

So I had to suggest to the new owner that he had better give the "Boss" a "monkey" out of his winnings, which calmed him down and, unfortunately, inspired him to even greater efforts in the same direction. He went back to America and paid 8000 guineas for an animal named Ray del Caredes, which he renamed Americus. It duly landed in England, but only a short time elapsed before it turned a roarer.

The "Boss" expected great things from Americus. The animal had won the rich Futurity Stakes in the States, but when I got him he suffered from a very bad mouth and could never be properly handled. There is no doubt, of course, that the horse could go. Being only a two-year-old, he had not been doped as had most of the American horses I had come across. But one way and another he was very unlucky. Croker came up to me at Sandown Park one day when I thought Americus would win. Jack Watts rode the colt, but the moment the gate went up he suddenly whipped round and got hopelessly left.

"Did you see that?" asked Croker indignantly. "He," meaning Watts, "did it on purpose."

Now, what could one say to an accusation like that? I asked the "Boss" why he thought Watts would do

such a stupid thing, adding that the horse had never been properly trained. This particular animal had only one side to his mouth and it all depended how his jockey caught him if he got away from the barrier.

One way and another, Croker spent a fortune experimenting with Yankee-bred horses. He brought over another one named Santa Anita, which had been bred by his friend Baldwin whom I have previously mentioned. But most of the horses he got hold of were utterly useless by the time they came into my possession. They had been doped up to the eyes, a practice of which we knew nothing in this country. It stands to reason, of course, that a drugged horse soon loses his vitality, and I rather fancy that some of the astute brigade in the States used to specially dope horses for the "Boss's" benefit.

The present generation of race-goers will think it rather strange that doping was not an offence against the Rules of Racing in this country thirty years ago. As a matter of fact, nobody knew anything about the practice and the pundits of our Turf were rather loath to take cognizance of methods which were whispered but never openly believed. In my own mind, of course, I regarded it as a highly pernicious evil and the authorities here have done well in making it a warning-off offence. The scientific breeding of bloodstock would long ago have degenerated into an utter farce had unlimited doping been permitted.

Only recently have the French racing authorities awoke to the same fact. It is more than a little curious that this doping of horses only occurs in countries where racing is a comparatively newly established sport. It began, I believe, in the United States and then broke out in France. In Austria, Germany, Italy, and Belgium they have all had their share and each country in turn has ultimately legislated against it. We got it here rather badly in the middle 'nineties and, as I have remarked, it was then no crime.

In the beginning it certainly proved a difficult job

for me to win any races for Croker. I remember him coming down to Wantage on one occasion and informing me that he would like to see his colours to the fore somewhere.

"Well," I replied, "we have a horse we can put in a selling race, but you will have to have a big bet if you want to get out on the deal."

"I don't mind that," said the "Boss".

I have forgotten the name of the animal, but I ran it at Kempton and it got beaten. The "Boss," with the inevitable cigar in the corner of his mouth, came to me in the paddock after the race and informed me, to my intense astonishment, that he had lost more money than he could pay. He had had £7000 on the horse and he did not know where it was coming from.

I had to laugh at him. Everybody knew that he had millions of pounds, but I think he did not fancy the idea of paying out. Some millionaires are like that; they will cheerfully pay away a fortune for a horse but bitterly resent the indignity of losing a bet. Anyhow, the "Boss" could not or would not pay the bookmakers until three weeks afterwards. When it finally dawned upon me that he meant to keep the Ring waiting, I suggested that he borrowed the money from a friend of his, another millionaire, named Strauss. No, he would not do that, although Strauss was staying with him at the time and would not have made any demur about lending him a million if he had wanted it.

"Boss" Croker's cigars were typical of the man. He used to walk about the world with a cigar stuck in the corner of his mouth, bringing to my mind his appearance at a reception given by the late Lord Wantage. The "Boss" did not particularly want to go, but as one of the leading lights of the district his wife impressed upon him the imperative necessity of putting in an appearance. After considerable grumbling he bedecked his portly

presence with silk hat, frock coat, and cigar complete. He very soon got tired of talking to the somewhat uninteresting crowd. After returning home he took me for a walk round the grounds of his own place. There we came across some pots of tar and brushes left behind by his workmen. What must the "Boss" do but pick up a brush and begin tarring the fences! Smoking his cigar and chattering away, he thoroughly enjoyed himself for about an hour. The more he went on tarring the more picturesque his garden-party clothes became. I told him about it; he did not mind. When the job had been done to his heart's content and the tar bespattered him from head to toe, he went inside, donned a bathing suit, and took a dive into the moat!

"The Moat House" possessed the unusual distinction of having a moat, but the "Boss" soon cured that. More to while away the time than anything else, he filled up the moat with earth and made flower-beds all round the house, making a lake in the grounds from where the earth had been excavated. So long as he had something to do he did not mind.

But I think his very best performances were at receptions given by his wife to which all the nobility and gentry for miles around would be invited. Poor Mrs. Croker would be comfortably entertaining thirty or forty people when the "Boss," cigar in mouth would look in at the door, nod genially, say "How do, folks," and walk out again as though he were still at Tammany Hall shedding the light of his presence on the voters of New York.

For a time at least bull-dogs took his fancy. He came home one day with a ferocious-looking brute he had picked up somewhere and got bitten with the bull-dog craze so badly that he eventually bought a famous animal named Rodney Stone. He gave £800 for this unprepossessing specimen of canine beauty and promptly proceeded to show him all over the country. Rodney Stone paid tribute to his price by winning

the "Boss" many prizes, until one day he met his Waterloo. But Croker, not to be outdone, bought the new champion for £1000 so that thereafter none could challenge his supremacy in the bull-dog world.

He liked to go about the countryside behind a smart American trotter and, as a matter of fact, all his racing knowledge was based on trotting. I happened to be out with him one day in a rubber-tired sulky when we happened to come across a gypsy leading a little donkey. Anything on four legs interested Croker.

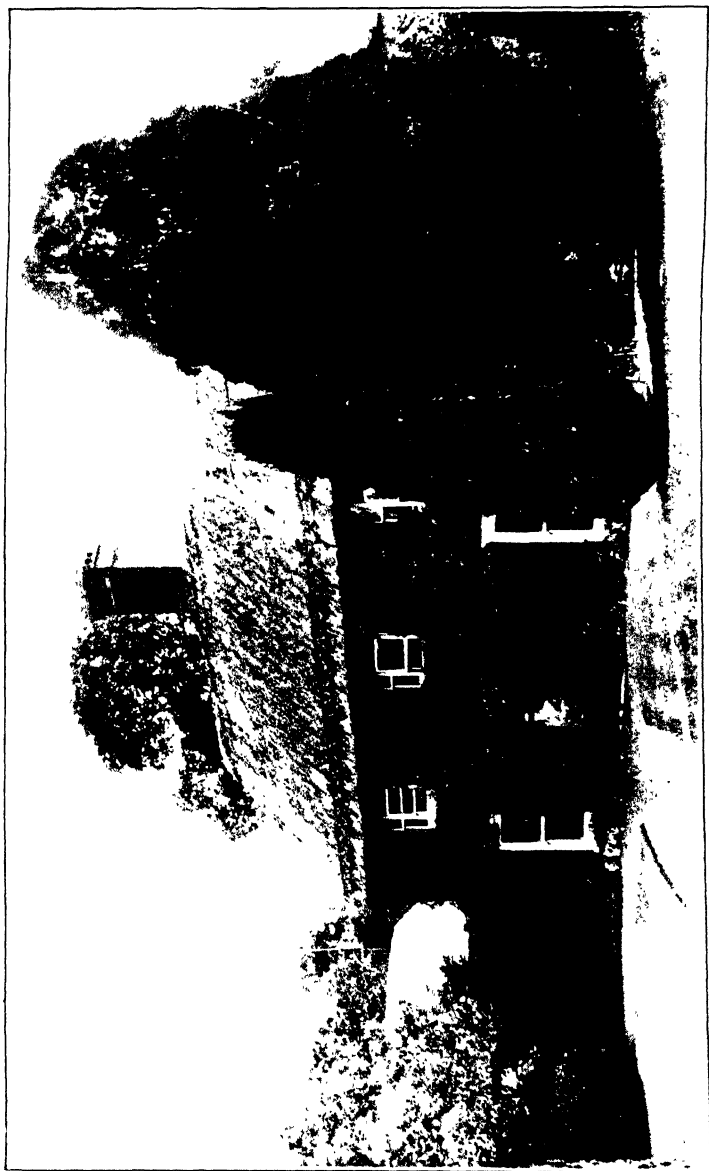
"That's a nice little donkey," he remarked. "I'd like to buy it. Ask him how much he wants for it."

The gypsy scented his chance. Eight pounds he wanted for his donkey, although fifteen shillings would have been ample. I told Croker so, but he said: "What does it matter? Tell him to bring it along."

The "Boss's" cigars were famous all over England. He used to get them from Havana direct, 10,000 at a time, decorated with a gorgeous band on which "Boss" Croker could be seen a mile off. Another relic, no doubt, of the boisterous days of Tammany Hall when a cigar from the "Boss" was almost the equal of a passport to the kingdom of Heaven.

When I first came to know him well he told me a good deal about the scandal which had resulted in his leaving New York. A Government commission, presided over by the late Theodore Roosevelt, had been appointed to enquire into the administration of Tammany Hall and, as a result, "Boss" Croker left New York and came to England to live. But with uplifted hand he swore to me that he had never made a dishonest dollar. Accusations of bribery and corruption were flung at him for weeks on end, but he denied them all and told me one day in the dining-room at Wantage that he might have been a fool, but he certainly had never been a knave.

He undoubtedly pulled the strings at Tammany Hall for many years after his departure. His erstwhile lieutenants, among them the famous "Boss"



THE MEMORIAL UNION, BUILT BY THE COMBINE BROTHERS NEAR WASHINGTON, FROM WHICH THE TRAINED ELITE IN CLASSIC WINSTERS.

Murphy, frequently came over to England to see him and stayed with him at Wantage. At one time and another I met them all, and if I discovered nothing else I realized that "Boss" Croker was a white man, greatly beloved of everybody with whom he came in contact. He went on racing for some time after I left him and won the Derby, the One Thousand Guineas and many other good races. Towards the end of his life he did one of those things so characteristic of him. His wife died and he married a very charming lady of Royal blood. I believe there is still trouble about his will and, indeed, it would be strange if there were not. He was a born fighter himself and, like most Irishmen, loved nothing better than to be in a little argument.

The American invasion proper began to take definite shape after "Boss" Croker had occupied the lime-light for a year or two. In fact, it was only just about this time that rich Americans started to race in this country at all. When Croker and I parted company he went over to the States and brought two other American trainers with him, Duke and Wishard, both of whom had been trotting men. They knew their business upside down, and except that Wishard used dope on some of his horses, nobody had anything against either of them.

The method he adopted was simple enough in all conscience. He would buy anybody's cast-offs for a matter of £50 or so, dope the unfortunate animals up to the eyes, and then win races with them. He did it all scientifically. He even went to the length of galloping his horses on the trial grounds to ascertain the exact effect of varying quantities of dope. What wonder, then, that for a time he achieved miraculous success and made himself the envy of the old-fashioned English trainer?

Duke was a different type of man. He originally came over as head man to Wishard, but Croker made him a sort of co-trainer and for some time the pair of

them did wonderfully well. However, I believe they disagreed, not through any fault of their own, but because their respective families could not quite agree. Duke came down to Wantage to stay with me, told me all his troubles, and on my suggestion took up training for some English owners. For some time he had horses belonging to Mr. George Thursby, who spent immense sums of money on the Turf and reluctantly dropped out of the game when he found it costing him a good deal more than was reasonable. By that time, however, Duke had established himself as a first-class man. He ultimately went to France, one of the first Americans to make his appearance there, and trained for the Vanderbilts. They had built a sumptuous training establishment at Maisons Laffitte. Duke invited me over on one occasion where to my English eyes there were revealed the most astounding sights. A stand like a signal box stood in the middle of the training-ground where there had been installed a highly complicated apparatus for timing horses in the American fashion. No expense had been spared to turn out winners, and certainly Duke proved a great success. When his principal patron died, Mr. A. K. Macomber, who is now also racing in this country, took over the establishment and engaged Duke. A few years ago, however, Duke himself joined the great majority.

Most rich Americans discover that the English Turf is infinitely superior in innumerable ways to that of other nations. Not only are the conditions here fairer, but good bloodstock with an English record will bring a much higher price than either French or American. No man who races on a big scale can afford to disregard such an important contingency.

Trotting is a sport which has long ago fallen into disfavour in America, England, and Australia. It was in trotting, I believe, that the doping of horses first began. At one time in the States it was the principal form of racing, but it fell upon evil times when

the dopers got hold of it and made it nothing but a flaming public scandal. Wishard used to buy horses here for a mere song and effect the most miraculous improvement within a few days. The horses would make their appearance in a selling plate and be backed down to odds on by a couple of well-known individuals named Gates and Drake. Gates was a very heavy gambler, but all might have gone well with him had he been able to keep his mouth shut. They nicknamed him "Bet-you-a-million" Gates. If anyone ventured to contradict him or assert that an animal recently weeded out of a Newmarket stable could not possibly win a race, Gates would offer to bet them a million that it could. As he knew all about doping he probably had good reason for his confidence.

I can remember another well-known American trainer who landed in this country as far back as 1880. He trained an animal named Iroquois to win both the Derby and St. Leger in 1881. He also had Parole, a six-year-old horse who put up an extraordinary performance by winning both the Great Metropolitan and the City and Suburban in the same year. Pincus, the trainer in question, remained in England for two or three years and then found, as many others afterwards discovered, that he could do better in his native land.

But of all the Americans I knew none could train horses better than James Huggins, who took over Mr. W. C. Whitney's horses towards the end of the nineties and won dozens upon dozens of races. Nobody could breathe a word against him; he trained his horses more in the English than the American fashion and he might have gone on indefinitely had he cared to do so. For three or four years he had a wonderful run of success with Lester Reiff and Tod Sloan as his principal jockeys. Huggins won the Derby of 1901 with Mr. Whitney's colt Volodyovski, who started a hot favourite at 5 to 2. At this same meeting American trainers were well in evidence.

Wishard, Huggins, Duke, and Eugene Leigh were all winning races. But Huggins stood out from them all and at the end of the 1901 season had won £30,000 in stakes.

We have not had many of them since that time. Mr. H. P. Whitney came over here not long before the late war with Andrew Joyner as his trainer. They did fairly well in a small way, although Joyner always trained his horses on English lines and made no attempt to emulate the ambitious efforts of his predecessors. To-day, we have any number of American owners in England, but no American trainers. I think the last one who tried to start here applied for a licence to train at Newmarket and had his request refused.

I would be the last person in the world to deny that American jockeys have not been of inestimable benefit to our racing generally. The pioneer of the business was J. H. (commonly known as "Skeets") Martin, who took up riding in this country in the middle nineties and successfully carried on for fully twenty years. He was always a good, honest horseman who excelled in getting away from the gate, and over a long, arduous career he must have ridden hundreds of winners. Hard on the heels of "Skeets" Martin came the irrepressible Tod Sloan, who for a few years carried all before him. Personally, although he often rode for me, I did not think a great deal of him as a jockey. He was nothing more than a freak, and apart from any ability he would display on a horse, there were continual complaints about his foul riding. Mornington Cannon reported him to the Stewards for an incident that occurred in a race at Doncaster, and as Morny was a pretty influential sort of individual the redoubtable Tod ultimately got his licence withdrawn. Although he may not have thought so, he had no cause for complaint. Times without number had Lord William Beresford and his wife, the Duchess of Marlborough, saved him when he was reported to the powers that be. Coming on top of this, Tod dis-

tinguished himself by hitting a waiter at Ascot with a champagne bottle.

Following Tod Sloan came Lester and Johnny Reiff, both of whom had an astounding run of success and rode hundreds of winners for their American confrères, Wishard, Huggins, Duke, and Leigh. They emigrated to France when the American millionaire started racing over there, and have not come back except on rare occasions to ride in a big race. One of Johnny Reiff's last appearances here was in the Derby of 1913 when he rode Craiganour and was disqualified by the Stewards for bumping and boring. As jockeys go, he must be getting on in years now. In his day he was certainly one of the best light-weights in the world. After the Reiffs came Danny Maher, whom I consider to be easily the best of all the American jockeys and certainly one of the straightest men you could wish to meet. Maher quickly made his name, and for fully fifteen years remained at the top of the tree. He was the undisputed champion until Frank Wootton came along, and then they ran a neck-and-neck race for years.

But it seems to be undeniable that the American invasion of the late 'nineties produced the effect of having our races run in faster time. Until that period, most of our crack jockeys made a point of timing their efforts for the last couple of furlongs. We had none of that pillar-to-post riding which became all the rage when Tod Sloan, and then the Reiffs, began to make our jockeys look so foolish. The Americans, especially Tod Sloan, were openly contemptuous of our horsemen, and it followed almost as a matter of course that if our jockeys wanted to cope with the invaders, they had to adopt a similar style of riding.

Nobody who has seen and remembered the great horses of the last fifty years will dream of saying that the average Classic winners of to-day are in the same class as horses like Ormonde, Isinglass, Flying Fox, and others I could mention. Yet it is an indisputable

fact that the St. Leger of to-day is run anything from ten to fifteen seconds faster than when the mighty Ormonde won it in 1886. Mr. Joel's horse, Black Jester, for instance, won the race in 1914 in three minutes three and two-fifths seconds. It took Ormonde three minutes twenty-one and two-fifths seconds. Fond as I was of Black Jester, having trained the horse myself, yet I could not be so optimistic as to imagine him to be anything like Ormonde. According to the difference in time he would have beaten the Duke of Westminster's champion by something like two furlongs!

George Fordham utilized the crouch long before we heard anything about the Americans, but English trainers were slow to make their apprentices adopt such a method before Sloan and the Reiff's showed them beyond all shadow of doubt that it was of immense assistance to a horse.

CHAPTER XII

IT is a far-off cry to the early 'nineties, to the days when hansom cabs jingled their musical way down Piccadilly and the lights of Leicester Square exercised a perennial fascination upon the imagination of impressionable country folk. What a change has come over the world since that time!

Motor-cars had not then been thought of, and the only bicycle we knew was the old-fashioned big-wheeler which makes the boys of to-day laugh consumedly whenever one is brought forth from its rusty resting-place.

The late 'eighties and 'nineties saw just about the last of the old coaching days; the post-houses of Piccadilly were gradually being transformed into hotels and restaurants where they preferred to cater for the London visitor in preference to the decaying bucks of Bohemia. Shall we ever see their like again? I doubt it. The West End of London to-day is a strange place to the sporting crowd who knew it forty years ago. Here and there one drops across a familiar haunt like the Café Royal, only to find all its accustomed frequenters strangers, utterly indifferent to the call of the road. If they must travel they charter a motor-car and go scorching along the King's highway oblivious to the beauty of the country they live in.

True, the tootling of the posting-horn is still to be heard along Piccadilly, but I am afraid it is but a voice in the wilderness sighing for the picturesque customs that have gone never to return.

Foremost among the young bloods of the town was Ronald Moncrieffe, brother of the famous and beautiful

Countess of Dudley, who became the manager of the horses belonging to Colonel J. T. North.

In circumstances I have already related, I came to be trainer to Colonel North and Colonel Oliver Montagu after leaving "Abington" Baird in 1892. They took Chetwynd House at Newmarket, and for a time at least everything went swimmingly. Young Moncrieffe and myself got on quite well. We had had one or two little transactions before, notably with a celebrated horse named Buccaneer, which then, I believe, belonged to Colonel Sneyd.

When this horse was a three-year-old he made his appearance in a selling race at Sandown Park to be sold, as far as I can remember, for £200. Ronald Moncrieffe looked after Colonel Sneyd's horses, and if I am not greatly mistaken, he put the animal into a seller to have a gamble. At all events, Buccaneer won this particular race in a trot. When I say that he afterwards won an Ascot Gold Cup, as well as the Great Ebor Handicap at York, the City and Suburban, and innumerable other good races, it will be realized that Moncrieffe was taking an unjustifiable risk with such a horse. Buccaneer naturally won without ever being extended. Always being on the look-out for a ready-made winner, I examined the horse thoroughly when he came back into the paddock and found him to be more like a Derby winner than a selling plater. I had *carte blanche* to buy anything I liked for Baird, for whom I was then training, and when Buccaneer went up for auction I promptly stepped in. It would not have surprised me had the horse been run up to 1500 guineas, but when the bidding had reached 500 guineas, Moncrieffe came hurrying round to me and begged me to stop.

"All right," I replied, having a pretty fair idea what had occurred.

So Buccaneer was bought in. I mentioned the matter to "The Squire," but he did not seem to approve at all, particularly when Buccaneer afterwards

went on to win one good race after another. Eventually Moncrieffe went out to South Africa and established himself as a trainer, but I don't think he did much good. I was sorry to hear that he died in Durban a few years afterwards.

Colonel North and I did not hit it at all. Moncrieffe continually said to me: "Whatever you do, let the old man have his way. He knows nothing whatever about racing, but he wants to make a show."

He instructed me to take some horses to Doncaster, in fact, everything that we had engaged. There were four or five winners amongst them, but also several with no chance whatever. On the last day of the meeting in the Doncaster Stakes I had a horse called Primrose Way entered, but I did not want to run him as he was lame.

"The Colonel wants Primrose Way to run," Moncrieffe said to me.

"What's the use of running him?" I enquired. "He does not stand a chance."

"Let him run," said Moncrieffe. "It's no good arguing."

While the race was taking place I went into the Ring and someone asked me if my horse had any chance.

"Not a thousand to one," I replied.

"Well," he said, "Colonel North has backed it and has a lot of money on it."

"It's too ridiculous for words," I retorted. "The horse can't possibly win." Nor did it.

The Colonel was quite a personality in his way but, like many other owners, he thought he knew more than his trainer. When Robert Sherwood had his horses he won both the City and Suburban and Jubilee with an animal named Nunthorpe. But on each occasion Sherwood senior, being a man with a most cautious turn of mind, informed the Colonel that he did not think Nunthorpe would win. He told him to back something else the stable had running, with

the result that the Colonel lost his money. I don't blame him for feeling annoyed—who wouldn't?

"These damn trainers will tell you anything," snorted the Colonel, and thereupon he took his horses away from Sherwood, remarking that he would run his animals when and where he liked, no matter what his trainer thought about the matter.

In many ways one could not help liking him. A big, full-faced man with iron-grey hair which had originally been auburn, he was certainly one of the most picturesque figures of his time. Years before he had gone out to Chili as a working mechanic and had obtained a concession from one of the presidents of that republic to work nitrate mines. He came back to his native land a millionaire and the Press promptly dubbed him the Nitrate King. Society quickly adopted him and, like so many millionaires, he took to the Turf and also to coursing. He won the Waterloo Cup four times. I first came to know him in 1890 when a horse of mine called Macuncus ran second to a colt he owned named Simonian, in the Brocklesby Stakes at Lincoln. George Dobell, his partner, whom I have previously mentioned, was a great friend of mine and through him I came to make the acquaintance of Colonel North. When he went in for racing properly he leased Chetwynd House in Newmarket, where there were some of the best stables in the country, originally built by Charlie Wood when he gave up riding and took to training.

Colonel North spent his money very freely, like most of these men do, but most of it had gone when he died. He had a place at Eltham in Kent which was one of the show houses in the country. One way and another he owned quite a number of good horses, but he never had a Classic winner and his racing must have cost him a fortune.

Well, and so the eventful years went on. I trained for a good many other people, notably "Boss" Croker and Mr. Robert Sievier, before I finally settled down

with Mr. J. B. Joel, and I can say no more of the matter beyond remarking that he turned out to be the ideal employer. Over a matter of twenty-five years he has invariably displayed a knowledge and an understanding of the business which has played an all-important part in the success which has come his way. Often on coming down to Wantage he would tell me that he had not come to see the horses; only to see me. After a gallop I would ask him then if he would like to have a look at the horses, only to be told that stable time would do.

Many owners I have known have wanted to see their horses before they returned, regardless of the animals' welfare. But Mr. Joel, like a wise man, contented himself with paying me for the job and letting me do it. He saw with the same eyes that I did.

The amateur who thinks he can run a stable as well as the man who has spent a lifetime at it is one of the standing jokes of the Turf. There is one principle of success in racing as far as the trainer goes. That is, close application. See everything done yourself and do not allow your subordinates to do work that should be done by you. Times innumerable have I travelled with my horses, looked after them myself *en route*, and seen them plated. Furthermore, if there was a gamble afoot, I would wait to see them going to the post so that nothing should go wrong at the last moment.

I would like to relate here a story which illustrates the wisdom of these last-minute precautions. When I trained Mr. Sievier's horses, he owned an animal named Lavengro, a two-year-old, for whom he had refused £25,000. We had the horse in a £1500 race at Hurst Park and Mr. Sievier intended to back the colt for a lot of money.

I went to the stables at Hurst Park early in the morning to see that Lavengro was properly plated. I sat on the straw while the blacksmith was plating

Lavengro, watching him at his work, and talking to him. Suddenly, the horse flinched.

“ You’ve pricked him,” I said.

“ No, I have not.”

“ Oh, yes, you have,” I replied. “ I saw you do it. This is a nice thing,” I went on. “ How is the horse going to run to-day ? ”

I knew, of course, that Lavengro would not show any signs of lameness for half an hour or so, also that he had but a remote chance of being able to run. At ten o’clock I went back to the stable. Lavengro was then dead lame. The unfortunate blacksmith seemed very upset about the matter, but angered me further by refusing to admit that he had hurt the horse.

A miracle would have to be worked, and even then the chance was literally a million to one against. I had the plate taken off and stood Lavengro’s leg in almost boiling water for an hour. Then I put a linseed poultice on it. The hours sped on. If anyone had told me that Lavengro would run that afternoon and win, I would have thought him mad. At half-past twelve I left the course and went to see Mr. Sievier at the Mitre, Hampton Court. I told him what had happened and that it would be next to impossible for the horse to run.

He was very upset, naturally. He had a small fortune at stake and only the luck of my having been present when the damage occurred gave him the bare fighting chance of pulling off his gamble. We had lunch together and then went back to the course. Lavengro’s leg seemed a little better, and I told the blacksmith to put the plate on again. This time I watched him more closely than ever, instructed him where to put the nails, and had the job done so gingerly that the horse took it as quietly as a lamb. He seemed a bit better after being shod. I trotted him up and down the green strip of grass outside the boxes, hoping, if the inflammation had subsided, that he might yet get to the post.



THE FISH FOR THE BERRY, 1904

The more he moved the sounder he moved and at last, with a sigh of relief, he went as well as ever.

That is the story of what watchfulness will do. Lavengro ran and won, but if I had not been at Hurst Park early in the morning he would not even have started. Mr. Sievier's delight was unbounded, so much so that he wished to reward me by giving me half the stake money. However, that is another story.

I have known trainers take their horses to race meetings and then bother no more about them until they see their head lad on the course. After making a few enquiries they will go away and back the animals, forgetting that some days might have elapsed since they have seen them, and in that time anything might have happened. I have lost many races with animals that have left my stables in perfect condition. Two Lincoln Handicaps went adrift through horses being upset on train journeys and, indeed, racing abounds with cases of a similar nature. It does not necessarily mean that if you try a horse a week before good enough to win a certain race that he will be the same animal on the all-important day. You must watch them right up to the last minute, otherwise many a projected *coup* will surely be ruined.

I could tell quite an amusing story concerning the best-laid plans of men which occurred during the time I trained for Colonel North and Colonel Oliver Montagu. The latter, who was a great friend of King Edward, then, of course, Prince of Wales, owned a very good two-year-old colt by St. Simon named Soult. Colonel Montagu asked me one day if Soult would be able to run in a match with one of the Prince's horses, and although he did not definitely tell me so, I gathered that His Royal Highness had been having rather a lean time on the Turf. Some of his friends were anxious to arrange a match in which the Royal colours would be successful and to that end approached Colonel Montagu about running Soult

I should like to take the opportunity here of stating that there was no question whatever of improving Tranquil's condition. Mr. Lambton is a trainer whose record speaks for itself and there is certainly no more competent man in England. Tranquil was in tip-top form when she came to me ; her condition could not have been improved. I merely had to maintain her in that fettle. I make this explanation for the reason that after she had won the St. Leger she got beaten in the Jockey Club Stakes, but that was the result of

a misunderstanding for which no one could be blamed. After winning at Doncaster, I boxed the filly up and without notifying Mr. Lambton sent her back to her own quarters at Stanley House. Mr. Lambton expressed great astonishment at my having done so, saying that he would have much preferred that Tranquil temporarily remained at Wantage. He wanted her to run in the Jockey Club Stakes a fortnight later and, as the Newmarket gallops had not appreciably improved, she would continue to thrive on the Downs. But unfortunately, I misunderstood his intentions and Tranquil remained at Newmarket. Mr. Lambton was certainly not to blame and I could only condole with him for the bad luck that resulted in the filly being beaten.

Now for the actual story. At this particular St. Leger meeting Donoghue, some friends of his, Tom Reece the billiard player, and myself all stayed in the same house. Donoghue, who had already won the Derby that year on Papyrus, was riding him in the St. Leger. The colt was a hot favourite, and the way everybody in the house talked about him winning made me smile. They all said to me :

“Surely you are not going to beat us with Tranquil?”

I had had Tranquil, a big raking animal, just long enough to realize her usefulness. On the book, through some previous running at York, Papyrus looked like beating the filly but, as I told them quite plainly, she was very well and might spring a surprise. In my own mind I had just a little doubt as to whether Papyrus would stay the journey and I advised the betting members of the party to hedge on Lord Derby's candidate.

I must say I thought Papyrus would win; had there been no question of his stamina I would have looked upon it as a certainty.

Will I ever forget the reception I received when I came down to dinner on the night of the St. Leger?

I could not help Papyrus losing, however much I may have been responsible for Tranquil doing the trick.

“ You’re a nice beauty,” they all cried. “ What do you mean by it ? ”

But what could I say? Even Donoghue, usually the soul of optimism, looked daggers drawn at me, while poor Tom Reece would not speak to me all the evening. He felt very hurt that I had beaten him with Tranquil, but to be quite precise I had nothing to do with the matter. Mr. Lambton took charge of the filly on the racecourse, and I had certainly gone to the length of advising everybody in the house not to plunge too heavily on Papyrus. They could have had about 10 to 1 Tranquil, but so far as I know no one had a penny on her. I don’t mind admitting I was not at all sorry when that little party broke up. The only consolation I received was a very handsome present from Lord Derby and also one to be distributed amongst the stable boys.

CHAPTER XIII

MR. SIEVIER and myself parted company in the autumn of 1901 after a sensation-ally successful season. I had received a lucrative offer from Mr. J. B. Joel to take over his horses and Bob, for the time being, became his own trainer. He went on in the season of 1902 to do great things with Sceptre and I am convinced that nothing but sheer bad luck was responsible for this magnificent filly not winning all the five Classics that year.

Mr. Joel, a comparative new-comer to the Turf, had previously been training with William Jarvis, the father of the trio, William junior, Basil, and Jack, now at Newmarket. Only a short time elapsed before I began turning out some good winners for Mr. Joel, and in my second season with him I had the felicity of winning the Oaks with a filly named Our Lassie. I was fortunate in finding a Classic winner so quickly. Bred by Ayrshire, the winner of the Derby in 1888, from Yours, a mare Mr. Joel had bought at Newmarket, Our Lassie had some fairly good two-year-old form. She won the Sandown Park Produce Stakes, worth £2000, incidentally beating a very useful horse named Rabelais.

She looked like training on, but she did not win again that season and I had to put her by hoping for better luck as a three-year-old. The spring of 1903 proved to be very open and we put her in the Lincoln Handicap in which she got six stone. It was an experiment I have not been inclined to repeat since. I tried the filly very highly, well enough, at any rate, to make me think that with a good jockey we had a

tip-top chance. Mr. Joel concurred with my opinion and backed her to win a fortune. But on the Sunday before the race she started to eat badly, and I am not exaggerating when I say that she never ate a single oat from that time until she ran in the Lincoln.

I had to tell Mr. Joel that she did not stand a thousand-to-one chance. He stood to win something like £100,000 over the race, but I told him it was absolutely hopeless. Anyhow, she ran and lost. I backed both Sceptre and Mauvezin in the race to try and save his money but only succeeded in losing him another £2000. Over Norton, a six-year-old carrying only 7 st. 6 lbs., won, after which I put Our Lassie by and trained her specially to win the Oaks.

It clearly shows the part that luck must play in this fascinating game when a smashing good filly like Our Lassie could run unplaced in the Lincoln Handicap ridden by an able jockey like William Griggs and then afterwards come out and win the Oaks in a common canter. Of course, no animal is likely to show its true form if it will not eat; all its muscular energy temporarily vanishes through want of proper sustenance.

It seems utterly ridiculous that a horse carrying six stone can run nowhere in a handicap and then win a Classic race without being extended. Mornington Cannon rode the filly in the Oaks and had an arm-chair ride. But, generally speaking, I do not altogether approve of running three-year-olds, especially fillies, in a hard race like the Lincoln. Bob Sievier had tried the same experiment the year before with Sceptre, who is probably the greatest filly the English Turf has ever known and even she went under, though only by a head. It is an unfair handicap to ask a three-year-old, who may be only a young one at that, to run in a gruelling race against older horses in such an event, which is almost invariably run at a tremendous pace from start to finish. Such a severe task might very well spoil a good three-year-old for the remainder of its racing career, apart from the difficulty, if you

really have the Classics in mind, of keeping horses in training before the Derby and Oaks come on.

Mr. Joel fortunately recovered his losses when Our Lassie won the Oaks. He not only backed her singly to win a big stake, but he also had a substantial double, £10,000 to £500 Rock Sand for the Derby and Our Lassie for the Oaks. After that time I never ran another three-year-old filly in the Lincoln Handicap, although I had many more good ones through my hands. It is the worst possible time of the year to try them and there is always the risk of doing irreparable damage.

Our Lassie only ran once as a four-year-old. We started her in the Royal Hunt Cup at Ascot where she ran unplaced to Csardas and after that she retired to the paddocks to supplement the big breeding establishment Mr. Joel was then getting together.

However, I did not have to wait long for another Oaks winner. In 1907, Glass Doll, a wonderfully bred filly by the champion Isinglass out of Fota, brought further fame to Mr. Joel's colours, but she, like many other fillies, did not train on. There is no doubt, of course, that it never pays in the long run to keep fillies on the Turf too long. The cases of Sceptre and Pretty Polly clearly prove that the equine fair sex rarely, if ever, throw anything as good as themselves if their stud career is sacrificed to the winning of races.

Easily the best filly I ever trained for Mr. Joel—and without a doubt one of the best of the last generation—was Jest. By Sundridge out of Mr. Joel's own mare Absurdity, she made her first appearance on the racecourse in the Hurst Park Foal Plate in July 1912, when she was placed to two very good animals, a filly named Prue belonging to Lord Rosebery, and Light Brigade, the property of Lord Derby, both of whom were exceptionally smart. Then she ran second in the Autumn Produce Foal Plate at Manchester to another good filly in Waiontha, trained by my friend

Richard Wootton. At the Newmarket Second October Meeting, ridden by Frank Wootton, Jest, starting at even money, won the Bretby Post Stakes. At the Newmarket Houghton Meeting she began to show me some of her real form when she won the Free Handicap from Light Brigade, Karenza, and Aboyeur, the horse that subsequently achieved great notoriety when he got the Derby of 1913 on the disqualification of Craiganour.

I am afraid that Jest was a very hot-blooded young lady. In fact, had she been of the human species, she might have achieved distinction in other walks of life. She had to be taken out of training and sent to Childwick Bury to be mated, but even that proved of no avail. Eventually Mr. Joel sent her back to me and I found an animal who succeeded in keeping her calm. She went on very well as a three-year-old, so well, indeed, that I could see visions of her winning the Classics. I got her ready for the One Thousand Guineas, but unfortunately an attack of influenza intervened to prevent me being present on the day of the race. I was lying in bed ill when I received a telegram to say that Jest had won, but had been objected to. In a desperate finish, ridden by the late Fred Rickaby, she had won by a head and had been objected to by Wheatley on Taslett, the property of the Duke of Devonshire, for bumping. Rickaby said that the two fillies had certainly come together, and the Stewards upheld his contention that the fault, if any, lay with the Duke of Devonshire's candidate. It was a curious coincidence that in two of the Classics that year there should be the unprecedented happening of objections to the winner. In the case of Jest, Rickaby clearly proved that he was not to blame, and after a short hearing the Stewards overruled the protest.

Sam Darling, the trainer of Taslett, informed me that he thought his filly had been very unlucky to lose the One Thousand, to which I retorted that the Oaks

would show whether or not he was right. Richard Wootton, whose bad luck with Classic horses had become almost proverbial, provided the favourite for the Oaks that year in Mr. Edward Hulton's filly, Waiontha, and the result once more bore out my opinion about Epsom being an unsuitable place for the training of Classic horses. Waiontha could do no better than run fifth to Jest, while Taslett, supposedly unlucky at Newmarket, was beaten even more decisively and thus conclusively proved that the original result of the meeting had been a proper one.

I took Jest on to Ascot to run in the Coronation Stakes, but there she found herself hopelessly handicapped by having to give Prue a stone, an impossible task, as the subsequent form of Lord Rosebery's filly showed. George Stern told me that the weight tied her down. She did not run again till Goodwood when, giving 12 lbs. to another good one in Arda, she ran second and thus ended her racing career. There is no question, however, that on this occasion she ought not to have been beaten. Frank Wootton, riding Jest, tried to get up on the rails, only to find Maher on Arda refusing to let him through. We put in an objection and the Stewards took such a long time to settle the matter that people were laying 5 to 1 on Jest getting the race. Danny Maher, with whom I was very friendly, contended that Wootton had no business to be there and that he was fully within his rights in refusing to let Frank go through and win.

What a sensation it caused! It was the last race of the meeting and the Stewards sat for three-quarters of an hour hearing evidence. Not until six o'clock did we get away, when the Stewards announced that although Maher had undoubtedly stopped Jest from coming up on the inside, they thought that Wootton had no right to try and force his way through.

I asked Maher about the matter and he openly admitted that he had balked Wootton.

"I had the right to do it," he said to me. "I would

have done the same if I had been riding for you. What would you have done?" he asked me. "Would you have let him through?"

Well, that terminated Jest's career on the race-course. I sent her to Childwick Bury thinking she was safe in foal, but I turned out to be mistaken. Mr. Joel thought of having her put in training again but ultimately changed his mind, and Jest went to the paddocks where, five years later, she got her first foal, Humorist, with whom we won the Derby of 1921. The tragedy of Humorist and Jest dying in the same year I have already related, and in my own mind I have little doubt that had Jest been spared she would have added still further lustre to her name.

About this time Mr. Joel's colours were enjoying a phenomenal run of success, and although I shall not bother to mention in detail the innumerable winners I trained for him, I would certainly like to deal with the more outstanding incidents of the eventful years when the Childwick Bury Stud was so much to the fore. The year after Jest had won the One Thousand Guineas and the Oaks came Princess Dorrie, a worthy successor to our champion of the year before. She was a half-sister to Sunstar, being by Mr. Joel's St. Leger winner, Your Majesty, to whom I shall refer later, out of the celebrated Doris.

The Princess made her debut as a two-year-old in the Acorn Stakes at Epsom in which she ran second to a very good filly named Myra, being beaten a head in a desperate finish in the remarkably fast time of fifty-three and three-fifth seconds. She ran again in the Windsor Castle Stakes at Ascot in another high-class field, finishing fifth to Land of Song. At Liverpool, starting favourite, she again ran second to Glorvina and, continuing the tantalizing run, then found herself pitted against the unbeaten Tetrarch in the Rous Memorial Stakes at Goodwood where, naturally, she had very little chance. Four more

times did I run her that year but without any luck, and I had to put her by for the winter with the consolation that she would be certain to reward us as a three-year-old. She had already shown me that she stayed very well and it rested for her to make normal progress during the winter to pull off some of the Classics of 1914.

I gave her her first outing that year in the Tudor Plate at Sandown Park, where she more than confirmed my good opinion by running third to a very useful colt in My Prince. The following week, ridden by William Huxley, one of Wootton's boys, she made her appearance in the field for the One Thousand Guineas and completely corroborated her home form by decisively beating the even-money favourite, Torchlight. In the field were most of the horses that had defeated her the year before.

In no way could it be described as a fluky race. She had won it all the way, and when the time came for the Oaks she had so improved that I would not entertain the idea of her losing. On this occasion, also, the public were strongly of the same opinion. They made Princess Dorrie a warm favourite at 11 to 4 and she won the race even more easily than the One Thousand Guineas, beating all the crack fillies of the year in Wassilissa, Torchlight, Glorvina, and everything else that had finished in front of her the year before. Huxley was again the successful jockey. He invariably rode a steady race and I found that he would obey his instructions, a little matter which some jockeys are fond of disregarding. One way and another young Huxley rode many winners for me. He never knocked his horses about and there was no smarter boy in England in getting away from the gate.

That particular Epsom meeting I played a strong hand and if I had had any luck at all I would have won not only the Oaks but also the Derby. Black Jester, who, like Your Majesty, won the St. Leger,

looked like winning the Derby easily, when for some inexplicable reason he collapsed. But nevertheless I could not complain. I opened the ball by winning the Wallington Plate with Polystone, who afterwards made a great name at the Cape, the Coronation Cup, with that extremely useful horse, Blue Stone, who beat a smashing good field containing Fairy King, Maiden Erleigh, Louvois, and Arda, and followed this up with the Durdans Plate, won by another smart animal named Sun Yat, the Mickleham Plate with Bursar, and wound up on the Friday by Princess Dorrie pulling off the Oaks.

As the gallant Princess had shown signs of staying for ever, we decided to run her in the Cesarewitch. However, the handicapper gave her too much weight and she ran unplaced to a very moderate horse in Troubadour. After that, Mr. Joel decided that she should go to the paddocks, and I am only sorry to record that she never succeeded in breeding anything half as good as herself. Mr. Joel spent a small fortune in mating her with the most successful sires in England, but, alas, it proved to be labour in vain.

It is one great gamble, this racing of high-class fillies. Jest threw one which Mr. Joel named Laughter, and when I trained her I thought her to be one of the finest two-year-olds I had ever tried. It was a great tragedy that Jest, in her somewhat brief career at the stud, produced only two foals, one of them being Humorist, the other Laughter. On the trial ground at Wantage the latter had shown herself to be a stone better than another useful animal in Stupidity, who had won the Ham Stakes and beaten Mr. S. B. Joel's smart horse Pondoland. The week previous Stupidity had also won the valuable Lancashire Breeders' Produce Stakes. I took Laughter to Goodwood to run in the Prince of Wales' Stakes where, as so often happened with the Joel Brothers' horses, we found strong opposition in a horse named Sycion. However, since leaving Wantage, Laughter had not been herself,

and thinking discretion to be better than valour, I did not run her.

She disappointed me all through her two-year-old career. A strong gallop would put her completely out of action for some days, and although I thought she might improve as she went on, she never fulfilled expectations. After running Pogrom to a head in the Great Sapling Stakes at Sandown Park, I had to put her by until the following year. Of course, as events turned out, that was no disgrace. Pogrom went on to win the Oaks the following year. Frank Bullock, who rode Laughter in that race, confirmed my opinion that she did not stay and Mr. Joel did the wisest thing when he at once sent her to the stud in the hope that she would successfully take the place of Jest. One day, I believe, she will do ample justice to her breeding, and if that occurs we shall see a great horse.

Epsom, Goodwood, Brighton, and Ascot have always been my favourite racecourses and in recent years I must have won more races there than anyone else in England. The reason is not far to seek. All four meetings are of an altogether different character to the everyday, humdrum business of racing. It is very largely a holiday-making crowd which patronizes them, and Mr. Joel, like his brother, being an invariably busy man, always preferred his horses to win when he could be present with his friends. We would very often win half a dozen races at one of these meetings, bringing to my recollection a day at Brighton when I had won four races out of six, which prompted Richard Wootton to tell me somewhat aggrievedly that I seemed to have a monopoly of winning races at that place. I replied that I had been doing so for nearly forty years, so it had become a habit.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Joel never attended Brighton to see his horses win. When the time came round for the seaside fixture, he would say to me :

“Well, I suppose you’ll be taking the horses to Brighton? I shan’t come, but you can back anything for me that is likely to win.”

I suppose he looked upon it as a sort of annual benefit for me; certainly I took full advantage of it. I have won as many as five and six races at a meeting, one in particular being worthy of note because Walter Griggs rode five winners for me and then, in the last race, got beaten a short head by Frank Wootton in a thrilling finish. It made Walter very sore when the disappointed punters who had been following him all through the meeting called him a rotten jockey for losing their money, altogether forgetting the races he had won previously.

Thousands of people would follow Mr. Joel’s horses at Brighton sublimely confident that they would be successful. A gentleman well known on the Turf, rejoicing in the picturesqueoubriquet of Snuffly Levy, was on one occasion so confident of my success that he did not even bother going to the races. Instead, he remained in the Beaufort Club all day, had £100 on a 2-to-1 winner I ran, and then played his winnings up on a nice little mare called Menu, who did Snuffly a good turn by winning at 20 to 1. Snuffly went to bed that night a happy man, having won over £4000 by blindly putting his faith in my trip to the seaside. Nor am I exaggerating when I say that he did not know a horse from a hippopotamus.

CHAPTER XIV

NEXT to taking a wife, the most chanceable game in the world is buying bloodstock. The latter pastime also possesses the inestimable advantage of enabling you to cut your losses at the earliest possible moment, which is not always feasible in the matrimonial state.

Some few years ago I intended going to the Doncaster sales to see if there was anything worth buying and, talking the matter over with Mr. Joel, he remarked to me that if I saw anything I particularly liked I could buy it for his uncle, Mr. Henry Barnato. Mr. Joel pointed out one of the yearlings listed in the sale catalogue, saying from its breeding it appeared to be a likely animal.

On arrival at Doncaster I had a look at this horse and, except that he had been blistered, he was a beauty. However, I would not buy him. It is asking for trouble when horses go wrong so early in life. When he came into the sale ring Mr. Tattersall, always scrupulously fair in such matters, said :

“ Now, I have a very beautiful colt to offer and one of the best-bred ones in the country. There is a reserve of 3000 guineas on him, but Sir Tatton Sykes wishes me to point out that as a result of a little accident he found it advisable to have the horse blistered. But he assures me that the colt is perfectly sound, and in the event of anyone buying him he is prepared to take him back within a month if the purchaser is dissatisfied.”

A perfectly fair offer, characteristic of the way the Sledmere Stud sell all their stock. However, nobody would make a bid for the horse and Mr. Tattersall was

just about to pass him out unsold when somebody said: "Three thousand." It turned out to be Duke, Mr. George Thursby's trainer. When I got back to London Mr. Joel asked me why I had not bought the colt. I naturally told him I thought 3000 guineas was a lot of money for a doubtful horse and I would not take the risk of paying such a price.

Now, although this animal had bad joints, he subsequently proved to be a very useful horse indeed, when his owner, one of the best amateur riders we have had for many years, got second with him in the Derby to St. Amant. John o' Gaunt was his name. I had good cause to remember that particular Derby day because I ran Sundridge in the Egmont Plate in which, carrying the welter weight of 10 st. 4 lbs., he just failed by a short head to beat a horse named Nutwith to whom he was giving no less than 56 lbs. Also, I felt not a little sore at not having taken a chance with John o' Gaunt, because previous to the Derby he had shown good Classic form and had the bad luck in the Two Thousand Guineas to get left, otherwise he would undoubtedly have won. In the Newmarket Stakes he beat St. Amant four lengths, and I have no doubt, everything else being equal, that he would have won the Derby. Mr. Thursby did not run him again, and at the stud he got some very good winners, the most notable of them all being Swyntford, by John o' Gaunt out of Canterbury Pilgrim, the winner of the St. Leger in 1910 and undoubtedly one of the best stayers we have had in recent years.

Of course, it is nothing more or less than pure chance. Lord Glanely, for instance, paid 11,500 guineas for Blue Ensign at the Doncaster sales a few years ago, and as the horse was being led out of the Ring after being sold, my old friend Sir Charles Nugent remarked to me:

"If that colt ever sees a racecourse you can hang me."

He was not a bad judge. As near as I can recollect,

Blue Ensign ran no more than once, if that. Lord Glanely, a millionaire of course, had another speculation when he bought Westward Ho! for which he paid, I think, 14,000 guineas. This horse did win a small plate at Lingfield and a race at York. Both animals, naturally, were beautifully bred and it is just on the cards that his lordship may some day get his money back. Their stock is now beginning to win races, but I shall be extremely surprised if either of them turn out to be worth their purchase price. It is a remarkable fact, but a perfectly sound one, that nearly all the great sires of our Turf are horses who have done well on the racecourse. With the mares precisely the opposite is the almost invariable rule.

La Fleche threw a few good winners, but nothing to approach herself. Sceptre and Pretty Polly were practically failures at the stud. With the exception of Jest, who threw Humorist, the Derby winner of 1921, the Oaks winners I trained for Mr. Joel never succeeded in breeding anything approaching their own merit. One can go through the long list of the Oaks and the One Thousand Guineas for fifty years past and find very few of the winners who have made a name for themselves other than on the racecourse. One of the few notable exceptions in recent years is Silver Tag, a Sundridge mare that Sir Edward Hulton raced with a good deal of success. In the main, it appears that an arduous racing career spoils a filly for breeding.

Could anything illustrate the chanceable nature of horse-breeding more aptly than the story of Gallinule, one of the most famous sires of the last decade. This horse originally belonged to the Marquis of Ailesbury, and "Abington" Baird bought him at auction for 5000 guineas. Evidently there must have been a good reason for selling the horse, a fact I did not discover until I began to train him for the Lincoln Handicap. Then, to my dismay, I found that he was in the habit of breaking blood-vessels. He certainly ought to have

won the Lincoln that year but, as I had feared, he broke a blood-vessel in the race. I had tried him with a horse named Acme, who just got beaten in the Lincoln, and in the trial Gallinule had beaten Acme by six lengths.

I gave him another run at one of the July meetings at Newmarket but in the meantime he had turned roarer. It was just touch and go whether or not I ran him, but I told Sam Loates, if he could not win, not to knock the horse about. However, Gallinule himself decided the matter by breaking another blood-vessel.

Back in the paddock after the race, Captain (now Sir Harry) Greer, the well-known Irish racing man, came up to me and observed what a pity it was that such a nice horse should be so unlucky.

"Yes," I replied, "it is, because he is a very good-looking horse and beautifully bred. What I shall do with him now I don't know."

"Well," said the Captain, "he is just the horse I should like for a stallion. I'm about to start a stud. Is he for sale?"

I knew, of course, that "The Squire" wanted to get rid of the horse. So I told Captain Greer that we would take £1500 for him.

"I would not mind giving you £1000," he said. "Fifteen hundred pounds is a little too much for me."

"All right," I said, "you can have him for a thousand." Baird had given me authority to do as I liked with the horse, and I don't mind saying that the sooner I got rid of him the better I would like it. Captain Greer agreed and wanted to know if I would mind his sending Barrow, the principal veterinary surgeon in Newmarket in those days, to see the horse.

"Not at all," I said.

The next morning Barrow came round, carefully went all over Gallinule, and found him perfectly sound.

“ Now,” he said (he was a kindly old man, one of the best in the world), “ I would just like you to put a saddle and bridle on him to try his wind.”

But time was flying on and I had a horse running in the first race.

“ I’ll tell my head man,” I said. “ You’ll have to excuse me now. I must get away.”

“ Oh,” said the old chap, “ I don’t suppose it matters much, Mr. Morton. I’m sure the horse is all right.”

I knew that Captain Greer did not mind about Gallinule breaking blood-vessels ; he understood all about that, but possibly he would not have bought the horse if he had known him to be a roarer. However, he took the horse away and duly paid for him. When I informed Baird that I had got rid of him he remarked that he was sorry for the fellow who had bought him. But it just goes to prove the irony of this fascinating business when Gallinule, who by all the canons of breeding should have turned out a complete failure at the stud, instead became one of the most successful sires of his time. He must have got hundreds of winners, among them Wildflower, whom Captain Greer himself raced and won the St. Leger in 1898, and the famous Pretty Polly, who won the One Thousand Guineas, the Oaks, and the St. Leger in 1904, and innumerable other races. Slieve Gallion, the winner of the Two Thousand Guineas in 1907, the Craven Stakes and the St. James’ Palace Stakes, and third in the Derby to Orby, for which he started an odds-on favourite, was another smashing good horse sired by my cast-off.

I had always known Gallinule to be a high-class colt, but his habit of breaking blood-vessels made it utterly impossible for him to win races. He simply could not stand the strain, although his weakness in this direction, and the roaring with which he became afflicted, did not prevent him making a great name for himself as a sire. Captain Greer, who also owned

Shieve Gallion, must have got a fortune out of Gallinule, and I am very glad that he did, for a more open-hearted sportsman never lived. He came to me after I had sold him the horse and said to me :

" Now, Mr. Merton, you have been very kind over this matter and I want you to let me make you a little present. Would you give me the pleasure of accepting a cheque for £50 ? "

Privately, I thought it a shame to take the money, but as events turned out I did the Captain the best turn anybody ever did him in his life when I sold him Gallinule. The progeny of that horse won hundreds and hundreds of races. If I recollect rightly, the last of them to run, as late as 1916, was an animal belonging to the late Sir Edward Hulton named Torloisk, by Gallinule out of Jongleuse, a mare bred from Baird's crack sprinter Juggler, whom I have mentioned in the earlier part of this book. The case of Gallinule is on all fours with that of Sundridge. In fact, practically all the great sires who have gone through the Sale Ring have been sold for a comparative song. The expensive animals have usually turned out rank failures.

You are practically taking a leap in the dark when you purchase expensive yearlings. There is no better judge of a racehorse in this world than Mr. George Lambton, who used to buy for His Highness the Aga Khan. Mr. Lambton had *carte blanche* to purchase what he liked and pay what he liked, but even with all the money at his command he found that the luck of the Lambtons did not always hold good. Of course, one can hardly expect to buy a ready-made racehorse, even as a yearling, without having to pay for the privilege. But within recent years there have been many notable cases of 10,000 and 12,000-guinea yearlings being worth little more than the price of an old song. Still, it is good for the breeding industry

and does not seriously injure the millionaire who has been the person most intimately concerned.

In buying at the Doncaster sales you need a pretty experienced eye to pick out the right animals. The principal point is the natural conformation of a horse. It must have good shoulders, a good back and loins, should stand well on its feet and have its hocks nicely underneath. In short, it must possess a trim and well-balanced appearance. You must have a good look at the animal's pedigree. Very often it happens that you may have trained one of its ancestors, or perhaps you may have seen the dam run on a race-course and been rather struck by her. Also, one may glean a little useful information from the stud groom. A sovereign sometimes goes a long way in ascertaining whether a yearling is all right.

I find it rather difficult to describe the exact way I would pick upon what I considered a good yearling. Make and shape is what we all go for and that is something which must be seen so that the effect of it may impress you favourably or otherwise. One sees hundreds of horses in training not worth a shilling. Certainly they race in all shapes and sizes, but I never cared about having anything to do with bad horses. When one happened to come my way I put it in a selling race and got rid of it as quickly as I could. The neck is a vital part to look for. Unless it is properly shaped and put well on the shoulders it spoils the whole appearance of the animal. With many years' experience of buying and selling horses, I have come to the conclusion that in the main the good-looking ones are easily the most successful.

The colour of a horse also requires consideration. My favourite is a bay horse with black points, and if I could get my ideal in this respect I would go on and pay practically anything. Liver-coloured chestnuts are also pretty useful, but I have a distinct antipathy to a black horse. Very few of them indeed have achieved any outstanding performances. In the

main they are inclined to be sullen and bad-tempered, with more than a suspicion of cowardice. Dark brown is a good colour ; I have nothing against such animals and, as I have remarked previously, they run in all shapes and sizes and, I might also add, colours. The light washy chestnut is a horse I have never liked. They are usually deficient in that bull-dog courage which means so much in a punishing finish.

One of the best-looking thoroughbreds I ever clapped eyes on was the grey French horse Le Sancy. I happened to take one of "Abington" Baird's animals to run in the Grand Prix at Deauville, a well-bred handicapper good enough to win almost any race. In the Grand Prix Le Sancy had to give him something like twenty-four pounds, and as I knew no horse in England could do that I fancied my chance at Deauville more than a little. However, Le Sancy won, which shows that he must have been a champion. When he went to the stud he sired Roi Herode, who not only got dozens of winners himself, but also had the distinction of being the sire of The Tetrarch. It only goes to show the luck of the business when I say that the dam of Le Sancy, Gem of Gems, belonged to Bob Howett, the old Nottingham bookmaker.

Tubbercurry, the dam of Hot Night, belonging to Sir Victor Sassoon, was at one time trained by me. I let her go to the Sledmere Stud, and as events have turned out she is now worth thousands of pounds. Of course, Sir Tatton Sykes puts his mares to only the best sires, but Mr. Joel could very well have done with Tubbercurry for Childwick Bury. However, you can go on with these vain regrets *ad infinitum*. A better name for the Turf would be Land of the Might Have Been.

The Turf is essentially a place where you must live and let live. Long experience has taught me that very little good comes out of objections, successful or otherwise. If you get a race on an objection you usually



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make bad blood with the owner and trainer. If your objection is overruled, you become annoyed with them and, in the main, nothing but trouble results. Particularly is this the case in big races where, possibly through no fault of the owner, trainer, or jockey, an objection is laid and succeeds, making everybody connected with the loser exceedingly sore. There is only one way to carry on in the racing world and that is to take your luck as it comes. Of course, in a case of a horse carrying wrong weight the Stewards must automatically disqualify it, but my fifty-seven years of the Turf have taught me that technical objections are usually grossly unfair to the people most intimately concerned. They may lose a race through some trivial little error which has had no effect whatever on the result, and in such instances it requires Stewards who will interpret the spirit of the Rules of Racing preferably to the strict letter. When all is said and done, horse-racing is the Sport of Kings and not a profession for the profit of dry-as-dust lawyers.

Thereby hangs a story which many people will still remember. During the middle nineties when I was training for a number of owners, among them Mr. William Sibary, I bought three or four yearlings for him, which included a Galopin filly out of Queen of Diamonds. We named her Galloping Queen. I did not give a great deal for her, probably not more than £150. The filly had been bred by the late Lord Faversham and although a very nice-looking animal, she possessed a flaw in her pedigree. Her dam, Queen of Diamonds, was not in the Stud Book and some little doubt existed as to her breeding. However, we ran the filly in a selling race at Newmarket and won, Mr. Sibary having a bit of a gamble on her. Charlie Archer the trainer, who used to bet in those days, ran second with his colt Frederick James, which he had named after his famous brother. The Galopin filly went up to auction, and after Mr. Leopold

de Rothschild had run it up to 700 guineas, Mr. Sibary told me to let it go. If he paid anything much more than four figures to buy it in there would be no great profit in the race. So Mr. de Rothschild became the new owner, but within a very short space of time complications began to ensue. A whisper went round Newmarket that there would be an objection to Galloping Queen. I happened to overhear someone talking, just catching the remark about there being an objection to the two-year-old. I could hear nothing more, but it suddenly occurred to me that we might be disqualified. I went to Mr. Sibary and told him so. He naturally wanted to know why.

"Well," I said, "I have not entered the filly properly and if there is an objection we are bound to lose."

It had dawned upon me that there were several mares named Queen of Diamonds and I had omitted, as specified by the Rules of Racing, to fully describe the mare so that she could be definitely identified. I had only entered the filly as being by Galopin out of Queen of Diamonds.

Naturally, Mr. Sibary and I began to stir ourselves. Later in the day we learnt that an objection had been lodged and any amount of money was wagered about our losing the race. I felt practically certain of it myself, so much so that I went to the length of telling Mr. Sibary that I would hedge my own money. I felt positive that we would be disqualified.

In due course, therefore, I made my appearance before the Stewards in the Jockey Club Rooms, where I found Charlie Archer who, I had been informed, had backed his horse to the substantial extent of a "monkey" each way at 10 to 1, so that he had quite a small fortune at stake. I did not blame him in the least. After all, these things are part and parcel of the game, although personally I detest them. Anyhow, Archer turned up before the Stewards looking like a lawyer equipped for the fray. He arrived

accompanied by half a dozen big books, a mass of papers, and all sorts of odds and ends to prove his case.

The Senior Steward on this occasion was Mr. James Lowther, than whom no fairer-minded sportsman ever lived. He possessed a reputation of doing his duty in conformity with the spirit of sport in preference to the strictest interpretation of the Rules of Racing.

The battle opened.

“ You object to this filly on the grounds of insufficient description ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ How does that come in ? ”

Archer produced the book and pointed out the Rule of Racing relating to the description of unnamed horses and their dams. Also, in proper ship-shape legal fashion, he produced reports of cases which to his way of thinking established precedents. By jove, didn't we go at it ! A Bench of judges could not have argued more learnedly than we did that day. For two hours it went on hammer and tongs and then, no doubt growing a little tired, the Stewards decided to adjourn, remarking that they would have to consider the matter further.

It did not require a particularly discerning eye to realize that Mr. Lowther was only bluffing Archer and I began to pluck up my courage. Said Archer, in front of the Stewards, pointing to me :

“ This man knows perfectly well that he has made a wrong entry because he has hedged his money.”

Now, that was not cricket. I had certainly done so, but it had nothing to do with Archer's case, and just that little touch of malice on his part prejudiced him more than anything he had said. At any rate, Mr. Lowther thought so, because he remarked that it had nothing to do with the Stewards. They would consider the objection on its merits without any irrelevant statements.

But now comes the touch of comedy. After the

enquiry had been adjourned, a friend of mine came to me and gave me some good, sound information. *Sotto voce*, he told me that Colonel Forester, one of the old racing brigade, well known to everybody at Newmarket and an intimate friend of all the Stewards, had privately expressed the opinion that I would be successful. The old gentleman did not bet heavily. About £2 a time was his usual. If he happened to have a "fiver" on a horse then it was nothing less than a racing certainty. He had a few horses in training himself, but he never bet more than £5.

"You will get that race," said my obliging friend. "The old Colonel has got two quid on your horse and he tells me you will win."

Although really not an important affair this Galloping Queen case shortly developed into the talk of the whole racing world. I think it must have been Colonel Forester who communicated with Lord Faversham, the breeder of the filly, who came hundreds of miles from some remote part of Yorkshire, without being asked, to give evidence on the matter. Like the Colonel, he was a gentleman of the old school, one of a sort none too common nowadays. Said his lordship, making his appearance before the Stewards :

"I have come all the way from Yorkshire specially to tell you that this mare is absolutely as well bred as she can be, that she is not insufficiently described, and you will be doing a great injustice to disqualify Galloping Queen," with a few more pungent remarks which might not have been strictly legal, but were certainly very interesting.

For my own part, I could not possibly see how the Stewards could do anything but disqualify us. There was the rule in black and white and one could not get away from it. Undoubtedly the whole affair was ridiculously trivial. Just because there happened to be several mares named Queen of Diamonds our filly could lose the race, even though my carelessness could not have affected the result one iota.

Well, next morning I arrived at the Jockey Club Rooms at eleven o'clock and went in expecting to hear my doom. It was quite an imposing assembly, everybody concerned being present, while there were enough papers and books lying around to do justice to a meeting of the Privy Council.

The very first words uttered by Mr. Lowther made me jump with astonishment.

"We overrule the objection," he said. "We are of the opinion that this is not a case of intentional negligence, nor one in which an objection could be successfully lodged on the grounds of misdescription."

After which, in proper legal fashion, he explained the real reason of the decision, leaving poor Charlie Archer, whose astonishment was only slightly less than mine, absolutely dumbfounded. But to give him his due he took his gruel like a man.

"Shake hands," he said to me in front of the Stewards. And I did so. When we got outside he asked me to come and have a drink, saying :

"You don't blame me for this, do you?"

"Not in the least," I said. "You were perfectly entitled to lodge an objection."

We went over to Archer's house and had a bottle of wine together, and I must say that I could not blame him for doing as he did. In all probability I should have done the same myself.

The result of this case fully bore out what Mr. Weatherby had told me during its progress. I happened to remark to him that I was afraid we should be disqualified. What did he think of the matter?

"Well," he said, "I can tell you one thing. They won't disqualify you unless they are absolutely obliged. They are very fair-minded men and they will not rob you of the race if they can help it."

Stupid stories one hears of Stewards being biassed are not borne out by my long experience of the Turf. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred their decisions are thoroughly impartial and given more with a regard

for the spirit of the sport, as is only proper, than a hard and fast interpretation of the written rule. After all, that is infinitely the better way. I know of a case which took place not so long ago when the rider of the second horse in a big race lodged an objection against the winner for foul riding and would undoubtedly have succeeded had it not been for the fact that the performances of the animal in question were of a somewhat varied nature. In this particular instance the Stewards might very well have called upon the owner, trainer, and jockey to explain some previous running. This they did not bother to do. With a true poetic sense of justice they just dismissed the objection for foul riding and thus disappointed the plotters of the victory they were anticipating.

But there are occasions, of course, when you lose a race on an objection and naturally feel exceedingly sore about the matter. It all goes to support my opinion that generally speaking objections are not worth while. They create nothing but ill-feeling, particularly if the protest is merely on technical grounds, and involves no question of foul riding or anything savouring of bad sport-manship. Here is a story which corroborates my view of this contentious subject.

At one time I trained that very useful mare Menu, who will be well remembered by the racing public. I ran her at Windsor, expecting her to win, carrying a lot of money. Win she did by six lengths, the result never being in doubt. But as I stood looking at the race down the course with the horses coming straight towards me I said to a companion :

“ I'll take odds that there will be an objection here. Menu has crossed over.”

Sure enough, Sir Charles Nugent, the owner of the second horse, Tom Wedgwood, objected to Menu for crossing. The Rules of Racing distinctly states that a horse shall be disqualified if it crosses over less than two lengths in front of another horse. I had carefully

watched the race myself and I had no doubt in my own mind that Menu had not gone over to the rails in the proscribed distance and I brought innumerable witnesses to support my case.

That particular afternoon there were not sufficient Stewards at Windsor to form a quorum, and the late Mr. George Edwardes, the Gaiety Theatre magnate, who had run a horse called Raytoi in the same race, which incidentally ran fourth, was called in to act as an honorary Steward. He sat on the case and concurred in the verdict that my mare must be disqualified and the race awarded to Sir Charles Nugent. I was astounded and determined not to lose my money without a strong fight. I lodged an appeal which came on for hearing at Hurst Park a fortnight later. Lo and behold, who should compose one of the tribunal on this occasion but Mr. George Edwardes ! Not only had he adjudicated at Windsor when Menu was disqualified, but he also stood to benefit by the decision as his horse Raytoi automatically became third on the disqualification of the winner.

I brought several witnesses who had been down the course, substantial men, some of them owners and trainers, to justify that nowhere in the last half-mile had Menu been less than five or six lengths in front. But even that did not appear to impress the Stewards at Hurst Park, so I brought up a second line of attack.

"I have another ground for complaint," I said. "Mr. George Edwardes has no right to sit on the case as he is interested."

That put the cat among the pigeons ! Jumping up in great indignation, Mr. Edwardes said to me :

"My dear Morton, you surely don't think I care whether my horse is third or fourth ?"

"That is not the question," I replied. "You are an interested party and your horse would benefit."

Well, we barged at each other for a long time, then I went out. Everybody imagined that I would get the race, but to their unbounded astonishment and

mine the Stewards announced that the appeal would be overruled. Leaving the money involved out of the question, I knew it to be a very bad decision. On the evidence of fully a dozen competent witnesses there were no grounds whatever for my mare being disqualified.

However, Providence occasionally takes a hand in these matters. More than a couple of years afterwards, when I ran Submit in the Cesarewitch of 1900, he won by a head from an animal which had been backed to win a fortune. That horse was Dibs, trained by Sir Charles Nugent. However, it is all in the game and we still remain the best of friends.

CHAPTER XV

INTIMATELY bound up with the Roar of the Ring are some of the greatest romances the world has ever known. The leviathan layers who have made fortunes on the Turf have always been men of a vivid, challenging personality, rough diamonds most of them but essentially sound at heart.

Most of them have come from the Midlands and the North, shrewd, hard-hearted fellows who started with nothing and amassed fortunes by an agility of brain and a capacity for figures which soon lifted them out of the ruck. There was a little band of them known as the "Nottingham Lambs," although I don't know that I ever heard of anyone who succeeded in getting much wool off their backs.

Ignorant people are fond of associating the word bookmaker with a leather-lunged shark who gets his living by methods outside the pale of respectability. Why this should be so I could never imagine. So long as the spirit of chance endures human beings will gamble and it is much to be preferred that they should do it in a decent sporting atmosphere than in low-down gambling dens where the chances of success are infinitely less than on the Turf.

Who will deny that the racecourse is not to be preferred to Monte Carlo? Also, who will say that the bookmaker does not offer better odds than the Prince of Monaco with his roulette and other games where the bank must win whatever happens? Up to the present, most of our national gambling has been done in the invigorating air of the racecourse, amidst conditions that improve every day.

The charity of the Ring is proverbial. Not so very long ago, when a well-known young gentleman had got himself into a scrape—and he didn't deserve much sympathy—some of his friends went up and down the rails collecting money to pay the lawyers. Two of the biggest men in the business promptly pulled out £100 notes, although they need not have subscribed a penny. And the same thing is always occurring. Whenever one of the sporting fraternity or their dependents are in trouble it is to the book-makers they go first of all.

First and foremost, head and shoulders among all the giants of the Ring I have known, was that grand old man Sir John Robinson, the owner of that picturesque Elizabethan mansion in the Midlands, Worksop Manor. He and I were friends for fully fifty years, and his life constitutes a romantic story without parallel in the history of the Turf.

Sir John was always a first-class bookmaker. As hard as nails, but eminently fair in everything he did, he soon began to get on in the world and deserted the Silver Ring for Tattersall's. Small betting did not interest him; in a very short space of time he became one of the biggest men on the rails.

"What price will you lay me so-and-so?" someone would ask him.

"Eight hundred to one."

"Done."

"Again if you like," John would say.

"Done."

"Three times?"

"Yes."

And so it would go on, John ready and willing to lay the odds to £1000. He made a fortune because as fast as he got his money he invested it in other businesses. He became the owner of a brewery with dozens of tied houses, and with ingrained shrewdness looked after them until the time came when he could say that he was well on the way to being a millionaire.

Practically everything he touched turned to gold, and when he abandoned the arduous profession of being a leviathan layer he must have been easily the wealthiest man in the Ring.

He established a big breeding-stud, bought the best bloodstock in England, but never ceased to be prudent. I recollect going to a race meeting with him and hiring a cab to take us to the course. John gave the driver one and sixpence.

"I want two shillings," said the cabby, as is their way.

"Nay, lad, tha fare is eighteen pence," handing that sum over.

"If you don't give me two shillings I shall summon you."

"Please tha self," replied John walking off. "Tha fare is one and sixpence."

Furthermore, when John had become a millionaire he still used to bet but in a slightly different manner from the days when he laid the odds. A couple of pounds each way, or at the most a "fiver," did him well enough. He would go up to Charlie Hibbert, an old friend of his boyhood days, and say to him:

"Charlie, what price will tha lay me so-and-so?"

Probably the animal would be a 3-to-1 chance, but Charlie, just to please his old friend, would lay him a couple of points over the odds and John, as pleased as Punch, would go round chuckling to himself at having beaten the market.

John had a son, a wonderful boy, a great cricketer, the apple of his eye. Everything he had in the world was for his boy, and I cannot express the grief I felt when young Robinson went to Australia and died there. He was John's only child and the tragedy of it caused me infinite sorrow. I remember once when he was showing me round Worksop Manor, telling me about some coal-fields that had been discovered on his domain.

"I shan't bother about them, Charlie," he said to

me. "If the boy had been alive it would have been different. Nothing matters now."

No better-hearted people than John Robinson and his wife ever lived. For something like thirty years they spent the greater part of their time philanthropically helping the poor. I don't know how many hospitals John endowed; I doubt whether he knows himself. The King gave him a baronetcy for the noble work he did during the war and there was never an honour more richly deserved.

Then we had the Hibbert Brothers, principal among them being the redoubtable Charlie, another of the celebrated men from Nottingham, who also succeeded in making a name for himself solely by the exercise of his bluff personality and sharpness of wit. I knew him away back in the eighties when he first donned a satchel. Like John Robinson, he soon became known. Charlie was a sport in every sense of the word; he would take a chance and lay you the most wonderful price about a horse even when he knew he would probably lose. For a good many years he ran horses in partnership with the famous Bob Howett, another Nottingham bookmaker. Howett and Hibbert owned a couple named Activity and Munden and won a fortune with them, which was the start of their real career as owners. Howett founded a big breeding establishment just outside Nottingham, while Charlie Hibbert, always of an adventurous turn of mind, went in for owning racehorses on a big scale. He must have had something like forty animals in training; for the greater part of the time Joe Cannon of Newmarket and Willie Nightingall of Epsom were his trainers.

One night in the Victoria Club, in 1911, Hibbert, when they were calling the card for the Lincoln, began showing them what he could do when he was in the mood. He had a well-known horse named Mercutio in the race. Somebody called out: "One thousand to eighty Mercutio."

"I'll have that," shouted Charlie across the crowded room. And he took it five times. Then he laid his own horse until everybody began to wonder what he was driving at. That year I had Spanish Prince in the race and I fancied him more than a little. Hibbert went on laying everything and anything. In devil-may-care mood he laid Mercutio to lose £20,000. Then he laid Spanish Prince to lose £10,000. When the morning came and with it perhaps a little more wisdom, it began to dawn upon him that he had done a foolish thing by laying the odds against his own horse. Up and down the country then he backed Mercutio to win him thirty or forty thousand pounds.

I went to Lincoln with Spanish Prince fully expecting to win. On the racecourse the first person I met was Charlie Hibbert, evidently just a little anxious about his horse and mine.

"Come on," he said in his bluff way. "Let's have a bottle of wine together."

"I'll have a ginger ale with you," I replied, having no intention of drinking champagne when I wanted all my wits about me.

"Ginger ale be damned."

"That or nothing," I said.

Over the festive board he broached the all-important subject.

"What about this horse of yours? There's only two in the race, yours and mine. I've laid a lot of money against your horse. What do you think about it?"

Spanish Prince had gone off his feed after getting into the train and I was just a little bit doubtful about him.

"One of the two will win, I think," I replied cautiously. "I'll let you know to-morrow."

Spanish Prince did not progress as I wished, and when I saw Hibbert on the Wednesday I told him that the horse had not done well and I did not greatly fancy him.

“Well,” said Charlie, greatly pleased, “I shall win the race.”

Maher rode Spanish Prince carrying a pound overweight, while Trigg rode Mercurio. My horse was badly drawn on the far side, Hibbert's being in the centre. There is a slight elbow in the Lincoln mile two furlongs from home. The first horse to be seen was Spanish Prince. Hibbert, watching the race from the stand, excitedly shouted out :

“Spanish Prince has won!” and then fell head over heels.

But my horse didn't win. A furlong from home the field closed in on him and he could only get third. When they picked Charlie Hibbert up he discovered, to his intense astonishment, that his own horse Mercurio was the winner. He must have won a fortune, and when I saw him afterwards he caught me by the arm, dragged me to the bar, saying :

“Come on, you'll have that bottle of wine now.”

It was five weeks later. Mercurio, with a fourteen-pound penalty, and Spanish Prince were in the Victoria Cup at Hurst Park. My horse then could not have been better.

“How is he now?” asked Charlie anxiously.

“He's all right,” I said. “I think he will win.”

“Right, I'll go for him.”

This time Spanish Prince made no mistake. Backed to win a ton of money, he started a hot favourite, and ridden by Frank Wootton won the race in a canter.

One of the best stories I ever knew about Charlie Hibbert concerned a rash bet he once laid in the Rutland Arms at Newmarket. A party of us used to stay there regularly and, after the day's racing, there would be wassail and wine. It was one of the rules of our little crowd that bets made overnight were not to stand the sober reflection of the morning. One convivial evening Tom Corns, the Chairman of Tattersall's Committee, who owned some horses of his own, was relating a story about an animal he had

been interested in some years previously, by the name of Don Juan. Tom and his partner, George Lambert, had the idea of winning the Cesarewitch with Don Juan, and to keep his weight down had put the horse in a five-furlong race at Newmarket. They hardly expected him to win, but nevertheless they had £500 on the horse, which resulted in his starting favourite. Somewhat to their disgust Don Juan won, although as events turned out it did not affect their plans, because the colt afterwards went on to win the Cesarewitch.

Corns, in reminiscent mood, was telling us the story when Charlie Hibbert chipped in.

"I remember it as well as you do," he exclaimed. "You are wrong. He started at 20 to 1."

"Oh, no, he didn't," said Corns, "I ought to know."

"You!" said Charlie. "You don't know anything about it. I'll lay you any money you like he started at twenties."

"Don't be silly," Corns replied. "I happen to know what I'm talking about."

"I'll lay you 100 to 1 you're wrong," shouted Charlie.

Corns laid a sovereign down on the table.

"Here you are, this is a ready-money bet and mind you don't cry it off in the morning."

"It's a bet," said Charlie pocketing the pound.

Next morning, however, doubts began to assail him. Getting up early to see his horses at work he called in at the Subscription Rooms, turned up the book, and found he was wrong. Now Charlie then must have been one of the wealthiest men in the Ring, but the idea of acknowledging himself to be wrong did not appeal to him in the least. The £100 made not the slightest difference to him. He would have lost £100,000 on a race and cheerfully paid out. Coming in to breakfast, he took the sovereign out of his pocket and handed it over to Corns.

"Tom, overnight bets void," he remarked.

“Oh, that be damned for a tale,” replied Tom, having a pretty fair idea of what had occurred. “It was a ready-money bet and I warned you about it. I am certainly going to hold you to it.”

“I’m not going to pay,” said Charlie. Nor would he. Corns was furious, but Charlie still refused to settle.

Everybody tried to make him see reason, but he stamped out declaring he would never pay. The upshot of the matter was that for seven years Corns and Hibbert did not speak. They had known each other for many years but now they passed each other as utter strangers.

One night Mr. Sibary, a mutual friend, got hold of Tom.

“This seems a bit of a farce you and Hibbert not speaking to each other,” he said. “Will you make it up with him if I bring him in now?”

I suppose Tom regretted the quarrel as much as anyone else.

“All right,” he grunted, “I’ll speak to him.”

So the peacemaker went outside and brought Charlie in.

“Good evening, Mr. Corns,” said Charlie like a naughty schoolboy.

“Good evening, Ironclad,” replied Corns. But he never really forgave Hibbert. From that time onward they would pass the time of day with each other, but nothing more. When Charlie died he still owed the £100.

John Howett, a nephew of Bob, was another big Nottingham bookmaker who surprised everybody by the amount of money he left. He was a very quiet sort of man who went on making money for many years without advertising the fact. Then we had Jacob Baylis, a Londoner, another bold bettor, who flourished exceedingly up to the nineties. Joe Pickersgill, the Leeds bookmaker, also made a fortune, being very careful in the process to avoid Charlie Hannam.



PRINCESS DORRIL, WINNING OAKS, 1914

Two of the most remarkable personalities the Ring has ever known were Steel and Peech who came from Sheffield. They were brothers-in-law. They were certainly plucky gamblers. Generally speaking, they were about as shrewd a pair as you could find. At Goodwood once they laid even money and 5 to 4 about two horses in a race to thousands of pounds and then had the felicity of seeing both animals being put into the cold-storage chamber.

There have been one or two outstanding instances of this description, but nowadays when betting on future events is next to nothing, one rarely hears of big sums being won in the dead meat market.

Rollicking Dick Dunn, he of the rich vocabulary, was another man of an enormous connection, although he studiously avoided the big commission agents. Dick's appearance in the Ring synchronized with the gathering of a crowd to whom he gave unending entertainment with his humorous back-chat. Then we had Davies the "Leviathan," who used to make enormous books on the Derby and other big betting races like the Cambridgeshire. He would make a £100,000 book on one race, which is something we never see to-day. Alec Harris, also well remembered, humble of origin but a marvellous man with figures, would lay any price about an outsider to get it in his book. Over a long term of years he must have handled millions of pounds, but what became of him at the finish I never heard.

Some bookmakers merely gamble: they do not conduct their affairs on a business-like basis. Joe Onley, a celebrated man from Manchester, lasted for some years laying thousands of pounds against favourites. Eventually he went under, as did many more men I have known who succeeded for a time in making a one-horse book and then struck a run of bad luck. Generally speaking, the Yorkshiremen and the Nottingham men whom I have previously mentioned did best at the game.

In the middle nineties we had the famous Joe Thompson from Australia, also an exceedingly good-looking, charming man named Humphrey Oxenham. Thompson, of course, had a fortune when he came here. He lasted for a time but gradually came to the conclusion that he had no chance against some of the giants we had at that time. Oxenham, a different stamp of man altogether, did all right in the Ring but lost a lot of money playing cards. He had to return to Australia without being able to settle, but like the good honest sportsman he was he paid up about a year later in circumstances which reveal how often the Goddess of Chance will smile on the efforts of the courageous gambler. When he arrived back in his native land he got hold of a mare called Cerise and Blue, carefully saved her up, and won the Melbourne Cup with her, incidentally backing her to win him something like £200,000. He had left England owing £40,000, but he paid every penny of it and thus fulfilled the opinion expressed by his innumerable friends in this country that his luck would surely take a turn for the better.

The enemies of the Turf fondly imagine the modern bookmaker to be a rough-and-ready opportunist who takes advantage of the human desire for gambling to make a vast and easily obtained fortune. But book-making is a rough trade; the racecourse is not a place for ewe lambs. It is certainly a drawing-room nowadays to some of the old Suburban meetings we used to have around London forty and fifty years ago.

Talk about Whitechapel! It wasn't in it when the "boys" used to make an attack in force in the old meetings like Croydon, Finchley, Streatham, Enfield, Bromley, West Drayton, and many others I could mention. Robbery under arms was a mild way of describing it. Woe betide any unfortunate jockey misguided enough to pull a

favourite. Up would come the railings and down on the jockey would come the "boys." Matters became so bad that legislation stepped in to prohibit race meetings within ten miles of London and Alexandra Park is the only one of the old suburban courses now left. Times innumerable, indeed, did the gangs "go through" everybody present. The police would stand by helpless, afraid of their own lives, and ultimately all the courses disappeared and passed into the hands of the jerry builder.

What memories do these bygone meetings evoke! F. G. Hobson, a famous amateur cross-country rider of years ago, happened to be going into the weighing-room at Streatham one afternoon after a race when a crowd of ruffians molested him, accusing him of having pulled a horse he had ridden that day. F. G., always a man of action, promptly retaliated by a slash of his whip which cut a great lump out of the nearest man's face. That temporarily eased the situation, but the following day at Kingsbury Races "Tub" was having a look at the fences when one of his friends of the day before popped up once more.

"Now then, Mr. Blank 'Obson, would you like a fight?"

"Not me," replied F. G. taking to his heels.

At the Eltham meeting, where there also used to be jumping, the "boys" saw the horse they had backed come down at the last fence, leaving the favourite to win at his leisure. In those spacious days the judge used to sit in a sentry box opposite the post. What did the "boys" do but tip it over with the unfortunate judge screaming blue murder.

"All right, you're not being killed," they shouted at him. "You've only got to wait there awhile."

When the favourite was passing the post they again called to him.

"Did you see that perishing blighter win?"

"Of course I didn't. How could I, you damn swine?"

"All right, you can come out," and with that the sentry box once more resumed its normal position. The race was declared void and the "boys" went on their merry way rejoicing.

If you wanted your watch or your pocket-book lifted you could always be accommodated. They did those things better in those days than they do now. Times without number have I known a man to be relieved of his "ticker" and to buy it back the same afternoon. But for sheer impudence Mr. George Payne, a famous racing man of many years ago, had the most comical experience I ever heard. The "boys" took his gold watch not once, but thrice. Twice he got it back by dropping a "tenner" in the proper quarter, and on the third occasion, while going to Liverpool Races, it once more turned up. More as a matter of habit than anything else, George produced the customary "tenner," only to find the lessee of the watch slightly dissatisfied.

"We're very sorry, Mr. Payne," he said in a hoarse whisper, "but you'll have to make it a bit more this time."

"What for?" demanded George. "Haven't you had enough? What do you mean by such treatment?"

"It's like this, sir," urged the offender. "The bow of your watch was getting a bit worn-out and we had to get another made for you!"

A well-known racing journalist lost his "ticker" at Croydon and on indignantly making representations to the King of the Thieves about playing such a scurvy trick on somebody in the game, received apologetic promises that he would have his watch back that very same afternoon. He certainly got a gold watch, even if it wasn't the one he had lost.

Still, the racecourses of to-day are a meek-and-mild affair to the times when all the riff-raff of London used to swarm out to the suburban meetings determined to get something by hook or by crook. Welshing then was a fine art and not the dangerous

pastime of the heavily policed meetings we have now. The ruffianly element still exists, but it is mostly confined to the open meetings like Epsom and Doncaster. One can still see hundreds of welshers at Epsom on Derby Day; they will always exist while bookmaking is permitted outside the enclosures.

Gone, also, are the exciting times when some of the wealthiest noblemen in the land would back their horses to win a fortune. Years ago it used to be possible to walk into the Ring and get Davies, "the Leviathan," to lay you £10,000 to £2000 about an animal, while Charlie Head, he who had once been a telegraph clerk and had abandoned that unprofitable livelihood for bookmaking, would chaff his aristocratic patrons into gambling thousands of pounds when they had set out with the intention of chancing a modest hundred. Charlie, of course, made many bad debts. Like the late R. H. Fry, he died leaving behind him fully half a million owed by punters who had conveniently faded away. However, as the old song went, "You can't take it with you when you die," and I have no doubt when Charlie reached the Heavenly Gate he did not bother entering the names of the delinquents in the book of the Recording Angel.

The American plunger, Theodore Walton, for a time at least won a fortune from the Ring by backing "jobs." But as luck would have it, he had a nasty habit of forestalling owners, and on one memorable occasion fell foul of the gigantic Sir John Astley, who could also do a bit of plunging himself when his finances were at a low ebb. "The Mate," in the hearing of the whole Ring, demanded to know what Walton meant by backing one of his horses before he had got a chance, ending up by offering him the soundest thrashing he had ever had in his life.

"Waal," said Walton in his nasal drawl, "I don't fight in business hours, but if you like to wait I guess I'll have a go at you big as you are."

But to the great disappointment of the fraternity

the brawl did not materialize. Walton went on his way rejoicing and returned to America with a huge sum of money. Next year he came back, but the jockeys and trainers he had touted so successfully the previous season gave him the cold shoulder or put him on to wrong 'uns. Plunging desperately to get out, he only sunk deeper into the mire, and before the season was half-way over he disappeared, leaving behind him many a mourner.

They don't get many big defaulters these days. For one thing there are not the men in the Ring to stand it and most of the leading bookmakers we have now make it an invariable rule to bet to figures. Nor can you back a horse to win much money at long odds. What between hundreds of touts at work and the indefatigable racing reporter the Ring knows almost as much about a horse as the owner or trainer. I was nearly going to say that sometimes they know even more.

CHAPTER XVI

BOHEMIA has blazed a new trail for itself since the far-off days when I first came to London seeking a little relaxation from the humdrum life of a trainer. Gone—apparently for ever—are the old haunts where one could depend upon finding congenial spirits—to say nothing of equally acceptable wines.

Jazz bands and interminable dancing have now come to be regarded as the beginning and end of a Bohemian life but, alas, it is but a poor substitute for the joyous old days when you could go up West in the full expectation of a pleasurable time in the company of men and women of the world.

There is no doubt, of course, that our capacity for enjoyment is rapidly undergoing a pronounced change. London especially grows bigger every day, and the people of the lower middle classes have infinitely more money to spend than was the case thirty and forty years ago. To-day all the rendezvous of the old Bohemian crowd I used to know so well have either regretfully abandoned the attempt to keep their old clients, or else, under new proprietorship, seek to cater for the *hoi polloi*, trusting to the notoriety of the old name to attract their custom.

It must have been fifty years ago that I first began to know the accepted haunts of the sporting world and, as near as I can remember, I had my very first dinner in London at the old Rainbow Tavern in Fleet Street. They did you very well there in those times, and not in the double meaning of the term. Dignified old gentlemen with mutton-chop whiskers waited upon you and gave you good wholesome food

infinitely more palatable than the Continental concoctions so prevalent in the restaurants of the West End to-day. The old Rainbow used to be one of the sights of London ; it took precedence over Simpsons', the Cheshire Cheese, and other places where you could always reckon on getting an English meal at reasonable prices.

Ah, well, they have all had their day and it seems just a little doubtful whether we shall ever see them again. Prosperity is a double-edged sword for mine host ; no sooner has he made a fortune than he begins to grow indifferent to the welfare of his house. Sooner or later the old crowd drift away seeking more congenial pastures.

In the early eighties the gay life of the Metropolis revolved around the now-vanished Gaiety Restaurant at the back of the theatre. The building has undergone many vicissitudes since I first knew it. Nowadays it is the headquarters of the Marconi Company, but forty years ago or more it used to be a famous restaurant patronized by all the bloods of the town. The actual restaurant itself consisted of a long bar flanked by an endless row of tables and the "nuts" knew it as "Prossers' Avenue." Actors, racing people, variety artists, and youths sowing their wild oats were the principal patrons of this busy thoroughfare. If you wanted to be "touched" for a "fiver" or a "tenner," you could always be accommodated in "Prossers."

"Abington" Baird, almost invariably accompanied by his most intimate friend "Stiffy" Smith, was one of the old Gaiety's most lucrative patrons. The news that "The Squire" had arrived used to make all the impecunious ones prick up their ears and turn over in their minds a likely tale for a "tenner." But "Stiffy," who had been born Ross Smith of a highly respectable Scottish family, used to get more money from Baird than all the others put together. He was an awfully good-looking fellow, tall and slim, with

the most engaging manners in the world. When "The Squire" got warned off for making some rude remarks to the Earl of Harrington at a race meeting in the Midlands, he transferred his horses to "Stiffy" and allowed him to run them in his name, while he hied himself to France and had a bit of racing there for something like twelve months.

I don't think Baird should have been warned off over what took place between he and Lord Harrington. Rather do I think that his wild behaviour generally somewhat incensed the Stewards. But coming on top of a good deal of dissatisfaction with his undesirable companions, the powers that be decided to stand him down for a time. He had ridden in an amateur race with Lord Harrington and, in the course of it, used a little strong language to his lordship about the quality of his horsemanship. I rather fancy Baird threatened to put him over the rails if he came too close to him. Anyhow, when they got back into the paddock Lord Harrington reported him to the Stewards. Baird might have got out of the difficulty by apologizing, but this was about the last thing he would do to anybody, so, in due course, he found himself warned off.

How he re-entered the fold is one of the most curious stories of the Turf. He got to hear from an intimate friend that the Limekilns at Newmarket, belonging then to a Mrs. Tharp, were for sale. Now Baird was no fool, although he did spend his money as though he had the Royal Mint at his command. I can see him now sitting in a chair looking at the man telling him about the Limekilns.

"They can be bought?" he asked reflectively. "But I wonder what the Stewards would say if they knew I was the owner?"

Where the offer came from I cannot remember.

Imagine the position! The famous Limekilns owned by a man who had been warned off! Of course, all Newmarket held up its hands in horror at

the idea of "The Squire" being able to prevent anyone from galloping their horses there. I don't quite know what took place, but this much is certain. Within a very short space of time the Limekilns definitely passed under the control of the Jockey Club. In any case, Baird would not have been off the Turf for long. All his escapades were harmless enough if one could regard them in the proper light.

The Gaiety died a natural death in the late nineties, shortly after the time when Romano's in the Strand began to blossom into fame. This was never a big place; only after Romano died and the business became a company did it enlarge and begin to cater for a less intimate class of customer. Originally it only seated about thirty people at a time. Romano himself had been an Italian waiter at the Café Royal, immensely popular with the Bohemian circle, and ever ready to oblige. I never knew such a cheery soul in my life. He would toss you for drinks morning, noon, and night, and the number of "dud" cheques he cashed would have broken the Bank of England. Bessie Bellwood, the predecessor of Marie Lloyd on the vaudeville stage, who used to gravitate between Romano's and the Tivoli across the road, was a great frequenter of the place in company with "Kim," the father of the present Duke of Manchester. The fair Bessie, of course, held a place in the world all her own. I happened to be in Romano's lunching with George Masterman, another of Baird's innumerable secretaries, after the historic fight in 1891 between Frank Slavin and Peter Jackson, two of the best men the Ring has ever seen. Slavin had been severely punished. He came into Romano's and I saw him sitting at the next table with a beautiful black eye and a terribly swollen head. Masterman said to him:

"I'm sorry you were beaten, Frank. Were you unlucky?"

"Yes, I was," replied Slavin ruefully. "He

happened to catch me a clip in the fifth round which dazed me or I should have beaten him."

As a matter of fact, having seen the fight myself, Jackson had him at his mercy right from the very beginning. But that was no disgrace to any man. I have seen all the great fights in this country in the last forty years and I never saw a better heavyweight than Peter Jackson nor a man who fought more fairly. He hit Frank Slavin when and where he liked, and when I saw him in Romano's that morning I marvelled at his pluck in being alive to tell the tale.

Just at that moment Bessie Bellwood arrived, cried: "Hello, George," to Masterman, and on his invitation seated herself alongside him.

We were all talking together when suddenly Bessie whispered something to George, who bent down to hear what she had to say. Before he could get the gist of it he let out an almighty yell. Bessie, as unconventional as they made them, had his ear in her teeth and she bit him like a terrier while he screamed for help.

"I'll give you something for talking about me," she shouted, after Frank Slavin had pulled her away. "What have you been saying to Romano?"

Frantically did George protest that he had said nothing detrimental to the lady's reputation and poor old Romano himself, panic-stricken, had to use all his far-famed diplomacy before Bessie quietened down a little. But these sort of things were always happening in the place.

Dozens of well-known men used to frequent the restaurant about this period. The Hope Johnstone Brothers, one a Major and the other a Captain, were always in evidence, two tremendously fine fellows and very good-looking. Then we had "Daddy" Huff, and the old *Sporting Times* crowd. There was "The Master" himself, one of the most genial men I ever met and known to everybody in London. Surrounding him you would find

his court, Colonel Newnham-Davis, easily the most-noted gourmet in London, dear old Arthur Binstead ("Pitcher"), Goldberg, "The Shifter," and Captain Jones. What a great crowd they were! Everything that went on in the Bohemian world was duly chronicled in *The Pink 'Un*, with never a word in malice. Captain Jones started a paper of his own which he called *The Tin Trumpet*, but it did not blare for long. I think the gallant Captain discovered that the old Master was a guide and philosopher all by himself.

Romano's used to be the great den of all the lion-hunters. Successful boxers, singers and actors, explorers, jockeys, trainers, in fact, everybody who had done anything, all found their way there. Arthur Roberts, still in the land of the living, was then in his prime and used to lunch at Romano's practically every day. I never came across a more versatile man. He was a master of expression—facially and otherwise, and his wit would put the comedians of to-day to shame. Nor did they receive the fabulous salaries so common these opulent times. Bessie Bellwood would be working three houses in the West End of London, the old Tivoli, the Oxford, and the Alhambra. I doubt whether she would have received more than £50 a week all told, a slight contrast to the £300 and £400 a week which some of the artists of the present time demand.

Then we had Florence St. John, for many years leading lady at the Gaiety. I never came across a more charming woman. Immensely good-natured, overflowing with the zest of life, she possessed a personality which thoroughly endeared her to everyone she met. And what a voice! When I look back and recall the musical comedies we used to get in those days and some of the voices we heard it makes me sigh to think of what is past and gone. There is no doubt that the musical comedy stage has never seen another man like George Edwardes. He and

I knew each other well, of course. For many years he owned horses and did very well with them. I have had one or two little breezes with him at various times, although I would be the last person in the world to accuse him of bias or ill-feeling.

Florence St. John, or "Sinjun" as everybody called her, created a great sensation by falling madly in love with a good-looking French tenor. They had been playing together at the Gaiety for some time and, as so often happens, the make-believe of the stage turned to real love. However, it did not last long. Florrie quarrelled with her husband but her popularity remained with her right up to the last. She still starred at the Gaiety and continued to draw the same old enthusiastic crowds as she had done in the days of yore.

No one begrudged her the innumerable triumphs she enjoyed.

Romano's continued to flourish for many years mainly because "The Roman," as everybody called him, provided the best food in London, the finest wines that money could buy, and unlimited credit. In the course of time it became enlarged, but it never lost its reputation as the principal rendezvous of all the leading sportsmen in the land. I happened to be lunching there one day with Bob Sievier when some very excellent wine came up for discussion. It so tickled Bob's fancy—as well as his palate—that he immediately sent for Romano. Bustling up, "The Roman" enquired our pleasure.

"This is good wine," said Bob. "Have you got much of it?"

"Yes, Mr. Sievier, I have got plenty."

"Well, send me fifty dozen," replied Bob promptly.

However, it did not last Bob long. With the help of a few of his friends Bob finished the lot in three weeks.

Going back a bit further than the Gaiety or Romano's, we had the old Café Royal in Regent Street, still going strong. Nicol, the original proprietor, established it in the seventies and over a long period made a fortune out of it. He was certainly a quaint sort of fellow. He would sit in the café wearing a top hat and frock coat sedulously avoiding speaking to anyone he did not know. I think he had discovered that it did not pay to know his customers too intimately; many of them had a lamentable habit of wanting cheques cashed. He started with nothing, and when he died he must have been worth half a million. Also, he employed many men who afterwards became famous in the hotel and restaurant world. Among them were Auguste Oddenino, who now has the Imperial Restaurant and has recently taken over Gatti's in the Strand, Romano, Luigi Naintre, the most courteous and diplomatic restaurateur I have ever known, also now a rich man, Menti, and many other Italians who have played a great part in the social life of London. There is no doubt that it is a profession worthy of more serious attention. To successfully run a big restaurant or hotel requires infinite tact and patience and, unfortunately, English people have never taken kindly to it. In the days I am referring to we had very few of the great hotels which are now such a feature of modern life. Claridge's Hotel in Brook Street and Brown's Hotel in Dover Street were the two most exclusive hostelries, while Hatchett's in Piccadilly and Long's in Bond Street received the patronage of the people who inclined to sport. Long's, a place with many years of history behind it, used to be one of the most aristocratic hotels in London, but towards the end of its time it started to decline in popularity. It came into the market, when an American named Jenks, one of the greatest gamblers I have ever heard of, bought it and put a manager in. An extraordinary fellow was this Jenks. He told me once that he had been to Nice

and lost over £50,000 playing baccarat. But he played calmly and coolly, never losing his head, although for three weeks the cards ran dead against him. Then the luck turned, and inside a fortnight he had won his money back in addition to another £100,000.

Like John Hammond, of whom I have already told, he used to invest his winnings. He would walk about London looking at properties for sale, and when he bought Long's Hotel he just regarded it as a trifling speculation to be profitably realized when a suitable opportunity arrived.

The Bath Hotel used to stand on the site now occupied by the Ritz, while Hatchett's opposite was the rendezvous of all the old coaching crowd. Every morning you would see the Brighton and Hampton Court coaches standing outside, setting off on their journeys with the tootling of trumpets, clearing the way amidst the busy throng of hansom cabs and broughams. The honk-honk of the taxi drivers' horn had not yet been heard and one could walk across Piccadilly expecting to reach the other side without the loss of a limb.

Walter Blake, one of the most prominent sporting men of his time, could always be found at Hatchett's or Long's, as could Carlton Blyth, the famous coaching man who is still alive and well but has long ago dropped out of the game. You would also find the old Duke of Beaufort, the Marquis of Ailesbury, Hughie Drummond (the banking family), Lord Lurgan, one of the most popular men in town, Sir George Chetwynd, and a dozen others renowned for their prowess on the Turf.

Walter Blake vied with Lieut.-Colonel Newnham-Davis as our leading epicure. But whereas the "Dwarf of Blood" specialized in the foods prepared by Romano, Walter had an insatiable fondness for jams. He was the crack pigeon shot of his day, and when he used to come back from Monte Carlo he

would bring with him dozens of pots of French-made jam, which he used to keep at his house in Berkeley Square. However, no good food came amiss to Walter. He and I were great friends; I knew him for many years afterwards when he had retired from Bohemia and lived at Brighton. One day a minor tragedy occurred. Walter and his wife had gone to Newmarket for the First July Meeting and while they were there Charles Sugden, the actor, brought Walter a telegram which Mrs. Blake opened. As far as she could ascertain, it was from a lady making an appointment with her husband, although as a matter of fact it had come from the lady's husband himself. But being rather jealous of the good-looking Walter she immediately taxed him with perfidy and a tremendous row took place which ultimately resulted in a separation. Walter went to live at the Bath Hotel, while his wife remained at the house in Berkeley Square.

Their mutual friends tried hard to get them together again and a committee was formed to formulate ways and means, I having the honour of being nominated the chairman. It was a comic-opera sort of proceeding; we all used to meet, including two lawyers, who would come armed with all manner of legal books whereby Walter could be assisted to heal the marital breach. But for a time all our efforts at compromise proved vain. The lady wanted a liberal allowance, while Walter would give her nothing. He said he had done no wrong, which was possibly true. However, the difficulty solved itself. One Sunday afternoon at the Bath Hotel, Walter suddenly became possessed of a craving for his beloved jam. He sent his valet to the house in Berkeley Square to ask his wife to give him two or three pots of his favourite condiment. Mrs. Blake sent back word that if he wanted his jam he had better come and fetch it himself. Walter did not want to go, but he ardently desired the jam. Much against his will, he walked round to Berkeley Square, went into his drawing-room, where he found



SPANISH PRINCE WINNING VICTORIA CUP, HURST PARK, 1911

his wife reclining at her ease in front of a beautiful fire, with his pet dog and cat beside her. Everything looked the picture of comfort, and Walter, always a sybarite, could not resist it. What happened between him and his wife no one knew, but Walter did not go back to the Bath Hotel.

I often went to Monte Carlo with him, where he invariably won a lot of money pigeon-shooting. On one occasion I remember well even the inducement of winning the Grand Prix had to take second place to his love of the good things of life. We were lunching at the Hôtel de Paris alongside the Casino preparatory to shooting in the afternoon when Walter happened to come across a wonderful old brandy. Some time elapsed before he could get it, but when he did he refused to leave it. Time sped on and the hour for the Grand Prix drew nigh. Two or three of Walter's friends agitatedly came in to remind him that he would be due to shoot before long. Still he tarried with the old Napoleon. Then they called his name, but the brandy still claimed him. He had been backed for a lot of money; that did not worry him. When he did make his appearance it was too late, and to the indignant expostulations of his friends he airily replied that no £500 prize was of the slightest interest to him while a bottle of seventy-year-old brandy could be drunk.

Walter certainly had a way all of his own. Shooting one afternoon at Monte Carlo he won some thousands of pounds from a certain noble lord who apparently found it rather inconvenient to settle. It is the custom at Monte Carlo to pay all bets after the shooting, and although the peer in question paid all the bookmakers, he said to Walter :

“Blake, I'll settle with you in the morning,” in an off-handed way that rather nettled Walter.

“Allow me to tell you,” replied Walter, “that it is customary for gentlemen to pay their debts before they leave the ground and I should prefer that you settle with me now.”

His lordship seemed more than a little surprised. He looked very hard at Walter, inclined, no doubt, to tell him to go to the devil. But he changed his mind, doubtless foreseeing trouble. Somehow or other he borrowed the money and gave it to Walter, who had no intention of contracting debts of honour with a man somewhat notorious for the money he owed.

We remained warm friends right up to the time of his death. He often stayed with me at Wantage and when he died, of cancer, I could only mourn the passing of one of the cheeriest fellows I ever knew. Not long before he passed away he wrote to me asking if I could put him up. That was during the difficult days of the war, when everything connected with racing was in a topsy-turvy state. I knew his love of luxury, and so I reluctantly had to tell him that it would be impossible for me to entertain him in a way I should like. So he went on to his sister's house, where he died, leaving behind him in the memory of his friends the recollection of a kind-hearted sportsman who had been one of the challenging figures of his time.

I can remember when Spiers and Pond first started the old Criterion. That must be fully fifty years ago. But, of course, one never saw the people there that you would find at Romano's, Hatchett's, and the like. They were what I might call an even more Bohemian lot, some of them bordering decidedly on the adventurous. The Criterion bar in those days was a favourite meeting-place for half the toughs of the town. The swell racecourse sharps loved to foregather there and exchange confidences, very often in the hearing of a couple of Scotland Yard men on the look-out for information.

I think it must have been at the Criterion that I made the acquaintance of the celebrated Harry Raymond, who afterwards achieved quite an amount of notoriety by stealing the Gainsborough picture, "The Duchess of Devonshire," from Messrs. Agnew's

rooms in Bond Street, and keeping it until the day of his death. The value of the picture may be realized when I say that a reward of £1000 was offered for its recovery.

Raymond took it with him to America, but he must have found it impossible to sell and, furthermore, the possession of it practically made a prisoner of him to his dying day. The time arrived when the Pinkertons heard that Harry was down-and-out and after a great deal of persuasion, added to a promise that he would not be arrested, Harry produced the Duchess.

From a furniture in New York he produced "The Duchess of Devonshire," as he had cut it out of the frame years before and kept it, hidden away like a miser's hoard until his conscience bade him restore the priceless treasure to its rightful owner.

Harry Raymond was always a bit of a desperado, a well-dressed man who frequented the most expensive places in town with unlimited money to spend. I came to know him through his buying a hack from me, but a very brief knowledge of him soon taught me to go very warily with him. On one occasion a Scotland Yard detective went into the Criterion bar where Raymond and a party of his friends were drinking. Harry and the detective, Shaw by name, were friendly enough and sufficiently familiar to have a drink with each other. But it was a case of what one would call armed neutrality.

"What's your game?" asked Harry, frankly.

"My game," said Shaw, "is to look after you."

Somewhat annoyed, Harry started to tell the detective what he thought of him.

"I don't want you following me about," he exclaimed. "You've got nothing on me at the moment and I should think no more of shooting you than I would a dead dog."

"Wouldn't you?" replied Shaw, looking his man straight in the eye. "Well, we'll see who gets the best of it in the long run."

That very same night "The Duchess of Devonshire" disappeared, and following that little escapade Harry became an exile for evermore. So he did not get any great benefit from his stupid crime.

Another bright little pair to be seen about the West End in those days were Kurr and Benson, who engineered the famous Madame de Goncourt frauds, for which they, in company with two Scotland Yard men named Meiklejohn and Druscovitch, subsequently went to long terms of penal servitude. Kurr, a typical racecourse crook, got hold of a horse of mine named Coroner through a third party, but his career as an owner lasted only a short time. In partnership with Benson he carried out a cruel fraud upon an old woman in France by pretending to back horses for her for vast sums of money. The old lady sent him something like £120,000, all she had in the world, until such time as her lawyers investigated Messrs. Kurr and Benson's *bona fides* and then put the matter in the hands of Scotland Yard.

But even that did not result in justice being done for some considerable time. Benson, the cleverer of the two, got hold of the detectives who were on their track and by heavy bribery put off the inevitable day of reckoning until other officers were put in charge of the case, when Kurr and Benson were arrested, to be followed shortly afterwards by Meiklejohn and Druscovitch. One sees many such things happening on the fringe of Bohemia, but only occasionally do they come out. It was only a few years ago that a big card-sharping gang, also well known on the Turf, were sent to various terms of penal servitude, at the same time implicating a well-known Scotland Yard detective. Still, there will always be the temptation to go wrong when thousands of pounds are being flung around by men with no idea of the value of money.

London, I am afraid, is growing highly respectable. Teashops and restaurants abound where previously

there were popular ports of call, and the old houses which used to resound to the coachman's horn now call to their clients with the strident strains of a jazz band. Well, other times, other methods. The mild joys of golf and lawn tennis are gradually supplanting the more robust sports of our youth, and even in those we have ceased to be supreme. Thanks to the efforts of a beneficent legislature, we are now liable to be locked up if we get a drink after eleven o'clock at night. By hook or by crook our legislators are determined that we shall become teetotallers. When that happens it will be time for me to fold up my tent and steal away into the land from which there is no return.

CHAPTER XVII

FOR sheer artistry, horsemanship, and infinite knowledge of the Turf and its doings, I doubt whether there has ever been a better jockey than Tom Cannon, the father of Mornington and Kempton Cannon. "Old Tom," as everybody called him, was not only a jockey whom I would class as one of the best of all time, but a man of irreproachable reputation.

The palmy days of his career were in the seventies and eighties, when he not only achieved world-wide fame for himself as a jockey, but also, during the time he was riding, controlled a stable where he kept sixty or seventy horses in training. Nowadays, of course, owing to scandals which arose in connection with certain jockeys, such a state of affairs is not permissible. However, in Tom Cannon's time jockeys could, and did, own and train horses of their own. Tom himself, bearing in mind the undeniable fact that in the race itself everything must be left to the jockey, made assurance doubly sure by riding his own horses and, one way and another, he enjoyed a tremendous run of success. As he got on in years he gradually dropped riding and brought his two boys in his place. Morny Cannon, to whom I had the pleasure of giving his first winning ride in 1887, speedily developed into the finest jockey of his time, and for a matter of ten years or so had few, if any, superiors in the world. I happened to ask Tom Cannon, one of my warmest friends, if he knew of a light boy who could ride a horse for me.

"Yes," said Tom, "I've got a son who might do

you very well. He hasn't ridden a winner yet, but he can stick on a horse and he'll do as you tell him."

I always liked to find jockeys who would do what they were told. So I gave young Mornington Cannon the ride, little dreaming that a few years later he was destined to follow so closely in the footsteps of his famous father. At any rate, he won the race on my horse and his father was the proudest man in the world.

"I would like to give the boy a present," I said to Tom after young Cannon had weighed in.

"Don't do that," replied Tom. "Give him a sovereign to buy some sweets."

Morny Cannon, like myself, is a little bit older since that auspicious event, but I dare say he will remember the incident. Afterwards he rode a great deal for me and we always remained on the best of terms.

At one time Tom Cannon occupied the training establishment at Danebury in Hampshire which had previously been the headquarters of the celebrated John Day. When things prospered with him Tom built the Chattis Hill place at Stockbridge, now the training quarters of H. S. Persse. Always a prudent man, he made a considerable amount of money and left his two boys practically independent of the ups and downs of a jockey's life.

Morny Cannon himself, still hale and hearty, possessed wonderful judgment of pace and the ability to swoop down on an unsuspecting adversary, thereby winning many a race that ought to have gone the other way. Only now and again have I come across men who could save a horse for one last effort and land him on the post a winner by a short head. George Fordham had the art, as did Archer, Danny Maher, and Frank Wootton.

Tom Cannon first rode for me when I took over "Abington" Baird's horses in 1888. When I com-

Jockeyship must necessarily make all the difference in the world to a horse. The veriest novice in Turf matters understands, of course, the difference between a horse being handled by a grown man and a little apprentice, but very few people realize the comparatively vast gulf that lies between an ordinary jockey and a super-horseman. Now, Sam Loates was undoubtedly a first-rate man at his job, but I think that even he himself would readily admit Tom Cannon to have been his master. Let me tell a story to prove my contention.

In 1889 I went to the December sales at Newmarket to see if I could pick up a horse or two for "The Squire." Old Tom Jennings, the father of "Young" Tom, as they still call him, had put up for sale a horse of his own called Father Confessor. The reverend animal had not done the church much credit. In fact, to be quite candid, he was little better than a selling

plater, a wiry, mean-looking horse apparently in want of a good square feed. However, I put that little fault down to old Tom's habit of working his horses hard. He did not believe in kid-glove methods. If an animal could not stand his training then he would get rid of it, and presumably Father Confessor had failed to flourish on his spartan treatment.

I might say I had no delusions about old Tom. If he sold a horse then there was usually something radically wrong with it. Still, that applies to most horse deals. It pays you to look with a jaundiced eye on every animal that is for sale. I saw old Tom in the paddock at Newmarket and said to him :

"What about this horse? Is he worth buying?"

"He is," replied Tom. "I've put a reserve of 1000 guineas on him."

"Is he sound?"

"There is nothing wrong with him," Tom assured me emphatically. "Except that he is a martyr to cracked heels he is sound in wind and limb."

I could always cure cracked heels in a horse and made up my mind to have a bid for the Father. When he came up for sale I soon saw the game. When they got anywhere near the reserve they meant to land the horse on the first genuine bidder, a rare old trick when a horse comes up for auction. Mr. Edmund Tattersall put the horse in at 500 guineas. There was a goodly crowd around him, but apparently very few people anxious to invest in the unimpressive Father. Still, "The Squire" had plenty of money and he would not mind what I paid. At 50 guineas a time the bidding ran up to 850 guineas. I murmured "900," and bang went the hammer. After the day's sale a friend of Tom's kindly took the opportunity to inform me that Father Confessor would never win a race, which once more put the demon of doubt into my soul.

I soon discovered him to be a very moderate horse, but after nursing him up for a time and getting him

“ That horse goes well,” he remarked. “ He did not go like that while I had him.”

Evidently Father Confessor’s change for the better deeply impressed him. He was not a man to bet much ; usually a “ fiver ” or “ tenner ” represented his flirtation with the Goddess of Chance. One day “ Young ” Tom arrived at Bedford Lodge.

“ Father says he has never seen the horse go like he does now. He wants to know if he is to have his tenner on ? ”

“ Yes,” I said, “ I think it will be all right.”

Father Confessor won the Cup in a canter, and we not only got our purchase money back first time but had a good bet into the bargain. Then I ran him in a race at Chester, where a wonderfully good horse named Tyrant beat him, thus clearly confirming my impression of his being more than useful.

Perhaps I may be thought to be deviating slightly from the matter of jockeyship in relating this story, but it all bears upon the subject. Also, Father Confessor was quite a famous animal of those times and many people will still remember his sterling performances. I had engaged him in the Manchester Cup in which the handicapper gave him 8 st. 5 lbs. It looked a good thing for him, and when I got to the course nothing was further from my mind than the idea of being beaten. When I told Tom Cannon, our first jockey, that Father Confessor would run, he informed me he could not do the weight ; it would be better to let Sam Loates have the mount. Dis-

appointed, naturally, I had no option but to agree, and Tom himself clinched the matter by immediately going into the luncheon room and treating himself to a substantial meal. I went in with him, still arguing, and was standing there talking to him when Lord Randolph Churchill came up and asked Tom if he would ride that clinking good mare of his, L'Abbesse de Jouarre, in the race. She had won the Oaks the previous year and had an outstanding chance in the Cup.

"I'm afraid I can't, my lord," said Tom regretfully. "I have missed riding one of our own and I should hardly like to get up on anything else. Also, I am certain I can't do the weight."

"That doesn't matter," replied Lord Randolph. "I'll have you even if you have to carry a pound or two over."

"Come along, Tom," he urged. "I should be ever so much obliged to you if you would."

Tom looked at me, smiled, and said :

"But I have just told Mr. Morton that I cannot ride Father Confessor and I really don't like riding yours."

But his lordship, always a persuasive man, finally induced Tom to change his mind and what happened was just what might be expected. He beat Loates on Father Confessor by three-quarters of a length, and most of the people who saw the race could readily believe that jockeyship won. This without any desire to disparage Sam Loates. There could be no disgrace in being second to a man like Tom Cannon.

However, there were other little troubles requiring attention. Baird, the owner of Father Confessor, had, like everyone else on the racecourse, seen L'Abbesse de Jouarre beat Father Confessor. He happened to be standing about twenty yards from the weighing-room talking to a friend, and after the race I walked up to him with the idea of offering a little consolation. He brushed that aside.

"How was it," he asked me, "that Cannon did not ride Father Confessor?"

"He couldn't do the weight," I said. "He rode the mare (carrying two or three pounds more than our own horse) overweight."

"It wouldn't have mattered if he had ridden Father Confessor three or four pounds overweight," said "The Squire" rather angrily. "Anyway, I don't think it is right and I feel very dissatisfied and annoyed."

"Well," I replied, trying to smooth him down a little, "I'm afraid I must take the blame. I was present when Lord Randolph put the matter to him."

"All right," said "The Squire." "Now, you go straight to him and tell him what I say."

Of course, as Baird had paid Tom Cannon £9000 to ride for him for three years no one could blame him for being a little petulant. Tom, more or less aware of what was going on, and fully expecting a first-class wiggling, stood close by anxiously trying to catch a word. I went up to him.

"Don't take a bit of notice of what I am going to say, Tom," I began, carefully keeping my back to "The Squire." I knew he was watching me. "He says you are everything that is rotten. If you had your dues you would be shot at dawn and he hopes you will never ride another winner as long as you live."

Tom burst out laughing; so did I.

"Well," he replied, "I daresay he does feel a bit cross. Tell him it won't happen again."

Carrying this olive branch, I returned to my employer.

"What did he say?" demanded "The Squire."
"Did he apologize?"

"Yes, he did, and he says he will never let it happen again."

"That's all right then," said Baird, who could never bear malice.

However, we took a spacious revenge for the un-

kind trick Fate had played upon us in the imposing personage of Lord Randolph Churchill. Father Confessor and L'Abbesse de Jouarre met once more, this time in the Liverpool Summer Cup, and on this occasion his lordship did not have the opportunity of inveigling Tom Cannon into deserting "The Squire." Father Confessor, ridden by Tom, made a hack of the Oaks winner and Baird fully forgave me for the little lapse of the meeting before. Robert Sherwood senior, who trained L'Abbesse de Jouarre, happened to be standing near me while the race was being run. Just before the horses were off he said to me :

"I am told you fancy your horse."

"Yes," I replied, "I like his chance a little."

"Well," said Robert confidently, "if there is one horse in the race I shall beat it is Father Confessor. The mare beat him easily before and is certain to do it again."

But Father Confessor won easily, much to Robert's mortification. After the race Baird, in a very I-told-you-so manner, took the opportunity to inform me—quite unnecessarily—that our horse would have won the Manchester Cup if Tom Cannon had ridden him.

I tell this little story to illustrate what a great jockey Tom Cannon really was. There is no doubt he could outride anyone of his time, and during the years that he, Archer, and Fordham were in evidence we saw what I consider to be the three greatest jockeys the English Turf has ever known.

Mornington Cannon gradually came into the lime-light when his father dropped out of the game and devoted himself to training. In his first year he rode a good many winners, and when he had become firmly established his father gladly left the somewhat strenuous life of a jockey for the more restful and enjoyable career of a public trainer. But in many ways Tom Cannon had imparted to his son Morny the same peculiar characteristics in riding a race. Morny, like his father, almost invariably preferred to

wait. He would come with his horse in the last furlong, snatching many a victory in the manner that his father had done. Also, he was remarkably strong and could always be relied upon to ride a horse well. From the early nineties until 1903 or 1904 there was no better jockey in England. The innumerable winners he rode for the best owners in the land make it unnecessary for me to dwell upon his merits. Morny's brother, Kempton, rather suffered from the shadow of the other's greatness, but nevertheless, he too was an adept horseman who achieved a considerable amount of fame.

Up to the early part of the present century owners and trainers were almost invariably fortunate in having plenty of first-class jockeys at their command. Nor were they the little boys one sees nowadays so frequently riding in the more important races. I can recollect the time when there were fully twenty good horsemen available, all of them skilful enough to win on any horse if the animal was good enough. This admirable state of affairs lasted up to about twenty years ago and then, for reasons I cannot define, the supply began to run short. It may have been nothing but pure chance; in all sports one finds that the luck will go all one way for a number of years. Then, for no explainable reason, the winds of fortune veer round. What could supply a better illustration of my meaning than the ill-luck which attended England in the Test Matches for a dozen years? Everybody who knows anything about cricket is well aware that the Australians are not stronger than they were twenty or twenty-five years ago when success used to come our way.

At the present time the American golfer is all-supreme. The French and American lawn-tennis players are mercilessly sweeping the board of all the championships. But it would be a rash man who would asseverate that such a state of affairs is likely to continue indefinitely. England has had her good times in everything appertaining to sport, horse-

racing, cricket, golf, and lawn-tennis, and it is not in our nature to cavil when the lean years arrive.

Returning to the subject of jockeys, there were many other good horsemen about in what I consider to be the golden period of the English Turf. Tom, Charles, and Sam Loates were excellent jockeys and rode innumerable winners. I would not rate them equal to Fordham, Archer, and Tom Cannon, but, as I said before, that is nothing against any jockey. The three Loates boys were short and did not possess the same strength as the trio I have mentioned. Tom Loates rode the champion Isinglass, who was the laziest horse ever trained, and it used to be said that had Tom Cannon or George Fordham been available, Isinglass would never have been beaten. However, it is easy to criticize. The criterion of merit is success, and the Loates Brothers did well enough to confound all the arm-chair critics who used to ride the race from the stand blandly oblivious of having no horse under them.

In the eighties we had the best crop of jockeys the Turf has ever seen. There was George Fordham, Fred Archer, Tom Cannon, James Goater, Harry Custance (who afterwards became a starter), Jim Snowden, Constable (a splendid jockey who used to ride for Lord Rosebery) the redoubtable Charlie Wood (still with us), Fred Webb, and a few others, all of whom were quite good enough to ride in any race in the world and in any company.

As racing galloped onward more good jockeys continued to come. In the nineties we had the Brothers Loates, George and Fred Barratt, Jack Watts, Mornington Cannon, Otto Madden, and American importations in the form of Lester and Johnny Reiff, Tod Sloan, and a few others. Johnny Reiff was only a little boy wearing an Eton collar and knickerbockers when he first arrived in England, but he went ahead very rapidly, and for fully twenty years enjoyed unlimited success, principally, of course, in France.

Rather reluctantly do I conclude that since that

time we have seen but few outstanding personalities among the horsemen of the last generation. Danny Maher, Frank Wootton, Bernard Carslake, Frank Bullock, Joe Childs, Steve Donoghue, and the late Fred Rickaby, are probably the best we have known in this time.

Wootton, Carslake, and Bullock marked a new era in the history of the English Turf. They were what I might call the vanguard of the Australian invasion which has become so pronounced within recent years, to the detriment of the American jockey, who mostly goes to France if he wants to try his luck outside the sheltering folds of the Stars and Stripes. Anyhow, Empire preference is good sound business and there is no reason, everything else being equal, why the Australian jockey should not have his chance here. Many people, I am fully aware, strongly disapprove of trainers engaging imported jockeys, but every trainer knows that the supply of competent horsemen is so limited nowadays that it becomes practically imperative to engage the best man you can get, irrespective of his birthplace. When I was compelled to look round for someone to ride Sunstar in the Derby of 1911 I picked upon George Stern as the best man available, regardless of the fact of his being a Frenchman. Stern, to be quite accurate, knows England almost as well as he does France, and he certainly speaks the languages of both countries without the slightest accent.

The Australian Turf, of course, is but a branch of our own. Practically all the bloodstock in the land of the Southern Cross is either British or descended from horses bred here, just the same as the Australian people. Therefore, there is no reason to bemoan any success that may come the way of our kinsmen from the Commonwealth. My esteemed friend Richard Wootton inaugurated a notable period in our Turf history when he came to England twenty odd years ago with his boys Frank and Stanley. Frank, in



GOLDEN SUN AND LORD ANNANDALE RUN A DEAD-HEAT, STEWARDS' CUP, GOODWOOD, 1914

company with the late Danny Maher, turned out to be the finest jockey of his time and the innumerable successes he achieved are written large in our racing annals. He must have ridden well over a hundred winners for me, and if I never have to employ a worse jockey I shall not complain.

But I think the real credit for Frank's many triumphs, to say nothing of the thousands of winners ridden by jockeys emanating from Treadwell House, Epsom, is entirely due to the efforts of Richard Wootton himself. Here was a man who showed English trainers how to teach apprentices the difficult art of riding a horse. It is not many men who care to take the trouble, but Richard Wootton did and reaped the benefit. The Huxleys, the Smyths, the Dicks, and many other prominent jockeys of their time, all owed their triumphs to the indefatigable Wootton, and it is more than a little interesting to note how his son Stanley has carried on the traditions of his father. To-day the apprentices of Treadwell House are still among the most sought after jockeys in England. Stanley Wootton, himself little more than a boy, not only turns out more winners than any other trainer in England, but he also undertakes the tuition of more jockeys than anyone else.

For the latter reason alone he is more than entitled to his outstanding successes. Only a trainer who has undergone the experience can appreciate the time and trouble involved in turning out good jockeys, and we do not possess so many that we can afford to lightly pass over the man who will take upon himself such an onerous and unthankful task. There are very few trainers in England who will readily undertake the burden of keeping a dozen apprentices in the expectation of getting two or three real good horse-men. Rather do they prefer to engage a ready-made jockey, leaving it to other people to suffer the strain of educating boys who may, or may not, ultimately repay them for their work.

Of course, if any trainer has the good fortune to have a number of promising apprentices, he can not only make a considerable sum of money in fees but there are other advantages which need not be enumerated. When I used to ask Richard Wootton for one of his boys he would naturally want to know all about the horse I had in mind, and it did not require any great intuition for him to understand that the animal would be worth backing. At all events, after I had told him all there was to tell he would say no more but step in and back the animal himself. One way and another he must have won a lot of money on my horses. For about five years before the war I had a wonderful run of success, most of my winners being ridden for me either by Frank Wootton or one of the other boys from Treadwell House. It was a *quid pro quo*. Richard Wootton kept me supplied with good jockeys and I kept him supplied with horses that he could bet on.

Occasionally, he provided his own horses for this purpose, bringing to my mind a certain day at Newmarket in 1914 when I ran the Glaze colt in the Khedive Plate. I might say I fancied my horse more than a little. Richard Wootton had one in the same race as well, a famous filly by the name of Silver Tag. I think it was the only time he and I ever had any words together. Ordinarily we were the best of friends.

Anyhow, someone came up to me in the paddock and said :

“ I don't know whether you fancy your horse or not, but Wootton's is very hot. It ran the other day but was a bit unlucky.”

Silver Tag and the Glaze colt were being saddled close together and “ Old Man ” Wootton—as everybody called him—naturally asked me if I fancied mine.

“ Yes,” I replied, “ I fancy it a bit but I am told yours is a certainty.”

My Australian friend was not giving anything away.

"Oh," he said, "I don't think much of mine, but I may put a little on it."

When the horses were on their way to the post I walked into the Ring and asked one of the layers how they were betting.

"Wootton's is even money and yours is second favourite," he said.

Fools notoriously jump in where angels fear to tread, and rather rashly I informed the bookmaker that Wootton did not fancy Silver Tag very much.

"They fancy it all right," was the reply. "They have backed it to win £10,000."

"But Wootton told me he did not think he had much chance," I persisted.

"Don't you trouble about that, Charlie," replied the Knight of the Pencil, "they have got enough money on it to keep you and I in cigars for a year or two."

Well, whether Richard Wootton fancied his horse or not the fact remains that it won, beating the Glaze colt, owned by my old friend Martin Fitzgerald, by a head. Naturally, I did not feel very pleased. I was walking back into the paddock after the race when suddenly I got a terrific thump on the back.

"That was a good race, wasn't it?" shouted someone. Richard Wootton, of course, beaming all over his face.

"You told me you were not having much on it," I said.

"Well, I only had £150 on."

"We had a great deal more on our horse," I replied, "and I don't want you to do that sort of thing to me."

The next day, Frank Wootton came along and asked me if I had had a row with his father the day before, so I told Wootton junior what I thought about the matter and he faithfully promised me that it would not happen again. However, these little happenings are part and parcel of the everyday life on the race-

course and there is no use in keeping at daggers drawn with one of your best friends if he occasionally does take "one for himself."

When Frank Wootton used to ride for me I think his father was under the impression that I should stand in *loco parentis* to his boy. I did my best in this direction but, of course, Frank grew up and did not want any chaperons. One St. Leger meeting at Doncaster Frank and some of the fraternity stopped up all night playing cards. The next day on the race-course "Old Man" Wootton very indignantly said to me :

"You had Frank round last night ?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Some of the nuts were with him, too. What did they do ?" he asked.

"I don't know," I said, "played nap or solo, I suppose. At any rate, I did not play."

"You didn't ?"

"No, I went to bed and it is no use your saying anything to me about it. You should look after Frank yourself. Don't blame me."

As a matter of fact, "Old Man" Wootton was tremendously fond of both his boys, which is all to his credit. They were sons of whom any father could be proud, and there is no doubt that Stanley in particular has got his father's brains and a little bit more.

The adventures Richard Wootton and I underwent would fill a book. We were having an argument at Doncaster one night with Mr. J. W. Milnthorpe about a horse of his that had run that day. Said the old gentleman :

"Ah, I know all about that. I had £500 on my horse when Frank rode it, but he did not exactly distinguish himself."

"What about it ?" demanded Wootton.

"Well, I don't know," replied Mr. Milnthorpe, "but I don't think that was his true form. I am

willing to make a match for £500 a side and put Danny Maher up on my horse, and you can put Frank up on the one that beat him."

The argument waxed fast and furious, but Wootton did not make the match. The next day I met Mr. Milnthorpe and said to him :

" You had a bit of a cheek telling Wootton that Frank could not ride your horse. He does not like being told those things."

" I know he doesn't," said the old chap, " but I will bet you another £500 he does not make the match."

Nor did he.

With all his uncanny skill, Richard Wootton never succeeded in training a Classic winner on Epsom Downs and, with but one exception, I don't know anyone else who has done so. It is just a little doubtful whether Epsom is a suitable place for galloping a horse over a distance, which is the only reason I can assign for the failure. Considering that Richard Wootton was one of the cleverest and shrewdest men we have ever known, and had some of the best horses of the time through his hands, his lack of success in the Classics was more than a little extraordinary. I think he should have won the Derby of 1913 with Shogun. On that occasion Frank Wootton, riding Mr. Hulton's chestnut colt, got hopelessly shut in when trying for his favourite position on the rails and only found an opening when it was too late. His father was almost in tears after the race. We watched it together and he said to me :

" Did you ever see anything like that in your life ? I thought he was an absolute certainty."

" Well, there you are," I replied, " you teach your boys to keep on the fence and stick there. You cannot complain if they lose races by it."

" Do you like your horses on the outside ? " he demanded.

" I don't know about that," I said. " A good jockey can see a long way from home and he ought to

be able to tell what he is going to do without getting shut in."

However, you can argue about these matters until you are black in the face without getting any wiser. Richard Wootton always taught his boys to keep to the rails. They undoubtedly won innumerable races by this method and also lost many, so it is probably six of one and half a dozen of the other. Donoghue is one of the best jockeys I have ever seen in the way of getting through. He generally finds an opening just in time. I recollect a Classic instance of a race being won by a quick-witted jockey who would have been hopelessly beaten if he had not switched over to the outside. This was in the Eclipse Stakes of 1905 when George Stern, riding Val d'Or, switched over to the outside and got up to win when it looked 100 to 1 against him. Personally, I am in favour of jockeys coming on the outside in preference to waiting for an opening which may or may not come. Richard Wootton and I used to have unending controversy about this problem. So many of his boys rode for me that I was naturally in an excellent position to speak with a little authority on the matter, but I don't think I succeeded in making him see my point of view.

The jockeys from Treadwell House are still carrying on the traditions laid down by "Old Man" Wootton. I won't criticize them, because success speaks for itself.

Since his time we have not had more than half a dozen first-class horsemen. Carslake, Bullock, Donoghue, Childs, and perhaps Fox and Richards, have been the best. The four men I have mentioned first stand out, and now that Bullock has finished riding we are none too well fixed when it comes to the difficult problem of getting jockeys for big races. I rarely ever saw Bullock ride a bad race, and even if he did he would be the first to admit it. Furthermore, no fairer-minded man ever lived. I deeply appreciated his spirit in 1922 when Mr. J. B. Joel had a filly called

Laughter running in the Oaks. Bullock was then our first jockey, but Alec Taylor, the Manton trainer, badly wanted him to ride Pogrom in the race. Having no particular delusions about Laughter staying the mile and a half and, furthermore, knowing that Pogrom could hardly lose, I told Bullock that he could ride Taylor's filly.

"No," he said firmly, "I shan't do anything of the kind. Mr. Joel pays me to ride his horses and I shall abide by my agreement."

Pogrom duly won the Oaks, but Bullock did not in the least regret his sportsmanlike action. At the end of the season we had nothing much in prospect for the following year, whereupon he accepted a retainer to ride the Manton horses. It is to be greatly regretted that he did not permanently settle down in England when he first left Australia. In many ways he was an admirable type of man, one of the straightest jockeys I have ever known and scrupulously fair in all his dealings. For many years he rode for the Imperial Graditz Stud in Germany and only gave up riding on the Continent when the war definitely terminated all his riding engagements abroad. He has now settled down in France to become a trainer, and I can only hope that he will enjoy the success he so richly deserves.

CHAPTER XVIII

HORSES, like women, are kittle-kattle. With the least luck in the world I would have won the Triple Crown with Sunstar in 1911, and I might easily have followed suit with Black Jester in 1914.

I never trained a more aggravating animal in my life than Black Jester. Like Humorist, he had been bred in the Joel family, being by Polymelus out of Absurdity. If looks went for anything he might have been a champion, but unless the mood took him he would only run his races in snatches. In the Derby, when it looked odds on him, he suddenly dropped his bit and stubbornly declined to take any further interest in the proceedings.

“What on earth is the matter with your horse?” everybody asked me. But it really needed no discerning eye to see what had happened. The horse had just taken it into his head not to win. When they returned to the paddock and George Stern got off the animal, I asked him the why and the wherefore.

“Well,” said George, “he could have won it if he wanted to. He seemed to be full of running and then dropped out without the slightest reason.”

Now, both Mr. Joel and myself knew Black Jester to be a smashing good horse, possibly the best three-year-old of the year if only one could catch him in a proper mood. Animals—and especially thoroughbred horses—are notoriously moody, and Black Jester, living up to his name, played us many a shabby trick before he finished his racing career.

On his blood and his looks there was no better horse in England, and when he made his debut in the

Great Surrey Foal Stakes at Epsom in 1913, being beaten a neck by that extremely fast horse Stornaway in what was almost record time—56 seconds—I naturally looked forward to a happy career with the colt. He did not show any waywardness whatever, nor had I any suspicion that he might not run his races out to the bitter end. But one or two more experiences with him began to show me signs of an intractable disposition. I had to tell William Huxley, who rode him in most of his races, not to let go his head, otherwise he might drop his bit. In a race at the Bibury Club, which he looked certain to win. I backed him for Mr. Joel to the tune of £1000. How he lost the race I do not know to this day. Off to a flying start, bang in front for about three furlongs, then suddenly that tired feeling. Another furlong in front, again pulling his jockey out of the saddle, only to drop back and be beaten when the Ring were shouting long odds on him. Twice at Goodwood, ridden by Frank Wootton, who never stood any nonsense with his mounts, he won easily, and I got no more out of him that season. In a way he reminded me of the lady who :

First she would and then she wouldn't,
And then she said she really couldn't.

I don't think he was a duck-hearted horse ; he just liked to find himself in the right mood. I ran him at the Liverpool Spring Meeting to win the Bickerstaffe Stakes, and from what he had shown me at home, I expected to win one or two of the Classics. In the Two Thousand, however, he got up against Kennymore and Corcyra, both of whom were well up to the best Classic form. And then it came to the Derby. On what he had already shown me, I said to Mr. Joel :

“ He is sure to run well. I don't see how he can be out of the first three.”

Well, man proposes and God disposes, and on this

particular occasion Black Jester played a grim joke on us in keeping with his name. As George Stern afterwards told me, he was just about to congratulate himself on having won a second Derby when the horse refused to go on. Everybody at Epsom that day was shouting him home. I had my glasses on him and, I must confess, it did not particularly surprise me when he suddenly dropped back and finished seventh to a lot of horses he had beaten out of sight in the Two Thousand.

Fortunately for owners and trainers, the Turf has many compensations. There are dozens of good weight-for-age races to be picked up with a useful three-year-old, and Black Jester made some slight atonement for his lapse in the Derby by winning the St. George Stakes at Liverpool and the Sussex Stakes at Goodwood.

Now comes what the sporting writers call the glorious uncertainty of the Turf. For once in a way we got our horse inclined to play the game. Taking him to Doncaster for the St. Leger, without having definitely decided who should ride him, I ran across Walter Griggs. Walter and I are very old friends. He had ridden our St. Leger winner, *Your Majesty*, in 1906, and over a long term of years many other winners.

"Can I ride Black Jester?" asked Walter. "I think he is sure to win."

Now, Walter Griggs is one of the few jockeys whom I consider to be a good judge of a horse. I would take his opinion where I would refuse to listen to that of many other jockeys. In this case, however, I knew only too well that if Black Jester would put his best leg foremost, then he would certainly win. Walter got up on the horse and cantered him over the Moor. He went better than I have ever seen him before. No trace of waywardness, no signs of temper, merely a perfect specimen of the thoroughbred.

That day, in keeping with his mood, he made Turf

history. He won the St. Leger in the record time of three minutes two and three-fifths seconds and made common hacks of everything that had beaten him in the Derby and Two Thousand. Mr. Joel did not happen to be present. Business in London claimed him and he knew nothing of his good fortune until he arrived at his house in Grosvenor Square.

“What’s won the Leger?” he asked his footman.

“Black Jester, sir.”

A pleasant surprise! Mr. Joel signified his approval by presenting me with a very fine motor-car and I, for my part, appreciated the compliment by putting him at the head of the winning owners of that year with just on £31,000 in stake money. As a matter of fact, we had won over £100,000 in five years, which is a nice little sum of money even for a millionaire.

I ran Black Jester in the Cambridgeshire with 8 st. 12 lbs. and once more he flattered me only to deceive. At one stage of the race I thought he had an even-money chance of winning, but evidently it was one of his off-days when he did not feel in the mood for strenuous battle.

Discussing plans for the forthcoming season, I said to Mr. Joel:

“I think there is one race we can win. Black Jester is just the right type of horse for the City and Suburban. He will get nine stone, but that won’t stop him.”

Of course, one does not often see any Classic winners in a handicap like the City and Suburban but, as I have explained before, Epsom is a meeting where Mr. Joel always liked to win. Some owners, and all trainers, like winning races on any course, but I always laid myself out to win something at Epsom and Goodwood. They are holiday meetings where a busy man can entertain his friends. Besides, the racing is not so strictly professional as it is at Newmarket and at places kept going by the regulars.

Anticipations about Black Jester getting nine stone

proved accurate. Only the champion, Bend Or, had won the race with such a weight for a four-year-old, but nevertheless I felt sanguine that Black Jester would do the trick. I have trained the winners of hundreds of races, but I never fancied a horse more than Black Jester for the City and Suburban in 1915. I looked at him in the paddock at Epsom. His rich black coat glistened like satin, and his rippling muscles proclaimed to the world his physical well-being. There was certainly no better-looking horse in England that year but he wanted understanding.

Side-tracking the issue for the moment, let me explain that Richard Wootton and I were always arguing about his jockeys sacrificing everything to get the rails. It was Richard's fetish that the rails meant the race, a little delusion that had once or twice cost him a small fortune. All his boys, sons and apprentices, had been inculcated with the same ideas. So, when William Huxley got up on Black Jester. I had something to say to him.

"None of that keeping on the rails," I warned him. "Whatever you do don't get shut in. You will have to wait with the horse, but you will always be able to come to the front when you like. If you happen to be on the rails half-way up the straight come on the outside. Don't mind about waiting for an opening."

Young Huxley obeyed my instructions to the letter. A furlong from home he came to the front with the race in hand just cantering.

"How much has he won by?" asked Mr. Joel.

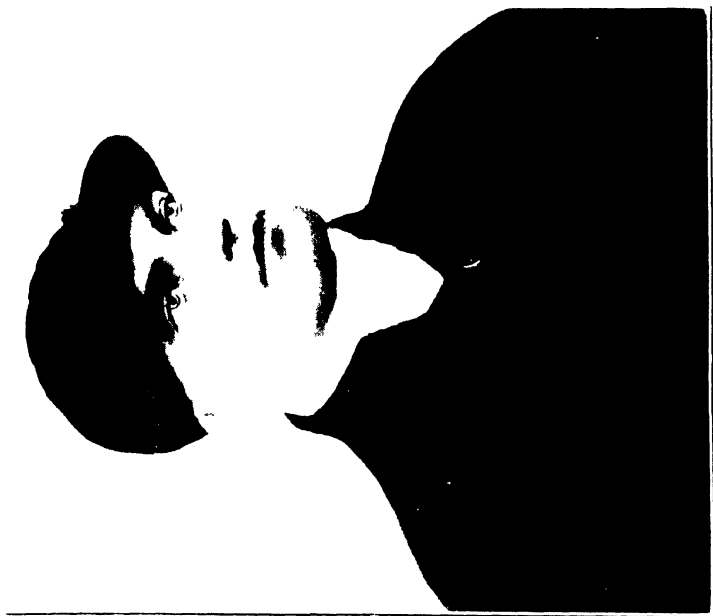
"About three lengths."

But I got a mild shock when the judge put up three-quarters of a length, and Huxley told me afterwards that fifty yards from the post Black Jester suddenly made up his mind that he had gone far enough. It was just as much as his jockey could do to win at all. Still, all's well that ends well.

I took Black Jester along to pick up the Chester Vase, one of those nice easy races worth a couple of



GEORGE SIERN



MORNINGTON CANNON

thousand pounds. To all practical intents and purposes it was a walk-over, but here comes the force of always looking after your own horses. I sent Black Jester on by one of my men, and when I got to Chester at night he informed me that the horse had gone raving mad.

Cheerful news! I found it to be quite true, the cause of all the trouble being an Arab stallion in the same yard screaming the place down. Black Jester had come in as quiet as the proverbial lamb. I got up at half-past five in the morning, but he seemed as bad as ever. Naturally, I wanted to know why the man in charge of him had not been possessed of the elementary intelligence to either take him out of the yard or else get the Arab away. However, that aspect of the matter evidently had not made any appeal to my factotum. He even seemed quite surprised when I mentioned it, corroborating what I have said about the desirability of a trainer travelling with his horses. If I had been with Black Jester I would have got him a box in another part of the town or at any rate done something to have kept him in a normal frame of mind.

Well, there you are. I know a good many rich breeders who take the opinion of their stud grooms about the mating of their mares. It evidently does not occur to them that if a man had the brains for such a scientific profession as the breeding of the thoroughbred, he might earn considerably more than the wages of a stud groom.

I tried my hardest to get Black Jester in a more placable frame of mind but it was just a waste of time. Ultimately I rang up Mr. Joel and told him that it would be out of the question to run the horse.

“But,” said Mr. Joel, “he has got nothing to beat.”

I agreed, but I could not see the force of running such a valuable animal to be beaten, as he obviously would have been, by a couple of third-raters. I took him on the course in the hope that he might quieten down but, alas, all in vain.

A tantalizing horse, without a doubt. At Newmarket in the Princess of Wales' Stakes, with 2 to 1 laid on him, he got beaten by Rossendale, not altogether to my surprise. Although he was one of the finest-actioned horses I have ever seen, with a beautiful free stride, it depended entirely upon his whim whether he would race. But Herbert Jones, the King's jockey, saw something that might have accounted for this apparent mulishness.

"That horse is set fast," remarked Herbert to Huxley.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, I should explain that set-fast is a complaint akin to lameness and is sometimes due to rheumatism or lumbago. Horses contract these complaints just the same as human beings, and it may be that Black Jester suffered periodic attacks which temporarily made him disinclined to struggle. Anyhow, one must respect the opinion of a good judge like Herbert Jones who has ridden many funny horses in his time and has had many years' experience of the game.

Just about this time I gave up training until things were in a more normal state. With the war in full swing it became a matter of unending difficulty to send horses to the provincial meetings, and I told Mr. Joel that it would be better to keep his horses at Newmarket until we could once more settle down. Charles Peck took them over, but Black Jester won nothing more, and at the end of the season Mr. Joel retired him to the stud. One day, I hope, he will show us his real merit by siring some Classic winners of his own, and if breeding goes for anything he may still achieve great fame.

Mr. James Musker, the Thetford trainer, offered Mr. Joel £25,000 for him, but I doubt whether double that amount would have tempted his owner to part with so promising a sire.

I have won the St. Leger for Mr. Joel twice and ran second on three other occasions. Our previous

winner, Your Majesty, by Persimmon out of Yours, the dam of Our Lassie, the winner of the Oaks of 1903, was a rattling good horse who might also have won the Triple Crown in 1908 had fate not dealt us one or two shrewd blows. In the Two Thousand Guineas our horse got away badly and never had a chance. Then an attack of strangles came along to prevent me getting him ready for the Derby, won that year by Chevalier Ginistrelli's Signorinetta, the worst Derby winner, I should think, we have seen for many years past. However, I got Your Majesty sufficiently well to win the St. James' Palace Stakes at Ascot, after which he went on to prove himself the best three-year-old in England by winning the Eclipse Stakes, the St. George Stakes at Liverpool, and the St. Leger.

In the last of the Classics he beat Signorinetta out of sight, also Norman III, the winner of the Two Thousand. But as a four-year-old, like so many of the Persimmon stock, he had ceased to take much interest in racing. Mr. Joel did not particularly want him as a stallion and ultimately let him go to Mr. Ernest Tanner for 22,000 guineas. He is now in South America doing remarkably well. Before he left England, however, he bequeathed us a valuable legacy in the shape of a filly foal out of the Childwick Bury champion, Doris. Princess Dorrie she was called. She won the One Thousand and the Oaks of 1914.

Lycaon, second in the St. Leger of 1911 to Prince Palatine, might also have achieved Classic honours in an ordinary field. He had run third to Sunstar in the Two Thousand and won a couple of nice races between times. However, it was a sufficiently meritorious performance to attract the attention of Mr. Donald Fraser, Sir Abe Bailey's partner, who approached Mr. Joel shortly after the Leger and asked him if he would sell the horse. Lycaon, by Cyllene out of La Vierge, a mare who gave us half a dozen good winners,

was a particularly handsome horse likely to take anybody's fancy. Mr. Joel telephoned me and asked me what I thought about the matter.

"Well," I said, "you don't want him for the stud. If you can get a good price I should certainly let him go."

"I have been offered 10,000 guineas for him," replied Mr. Joel.

"I should accept it," I said.

On that understanding Mr. Joel arranged for Mr. Donald Fraser to come over the following day to see the horse. But it goes to show the luck of this business when that very same afternoon while coming back from exercise Lycaon came down on the road and cut his knees to pieces. He was a terrible sight when Mr. Fraser arrived and I could only take him to the horse's box and mutely point to the damage.

"Well," he said to me, just as dismayed as myself, "he's a grand horse and I like the look of him. But, of course, he's never likely to run again, is he?"

"I don't think so," I agreed. "If you want him for breeding it won't matter, but if it is for racing then it is no use your buying him."

To give him his due, Mr. Fraser was perfectly fair about the deal.

"I want him for the stud," he said. "What is your opinion? Do you think he will be all right?"

"Yes, of course."

With that Mr. Fraser went away, and after talking the matter over with Mr. Joel, offered him 8000 guineas for Lycaon. Under the circumstances I advised Mr. Joel to accept that price and so the horse went out of my stable. Some time afterwards Mr. Fraser resold him to a German breeder for 10,000 guineas, so his trip to Wantage did not prove unprofitable after all.

I have seen many bad horses win Classic races and one of the worst of them was Night Hawk, the property of Colonel Hall Walker, now Lord Wavertree.

I knew him to be a rank bad 'un because a colt of mine named White Magic ran second to him and neither Mr. Joel nor myself had any delusions about White Magic being a champion. He was little better than a third-rater. What can one make of the time test when a horse like Night Hawk could break the record for the St. Leger by winning the race in three minutes, three and three-fifths seconds, which was only beaten the following year when our colt, Black Jester, chopped a second off it? Certainly, Colonel Hall Walker had no false ideas about Night Hawk's ability because he sold him shortly afterwards for the very handsome price of, I believe, 10,000 guineas, and doubtless shook hands with himself for making a good bargain. Only a week before the race Night Hawk had run in the Breeders' St. Leger at Derby and could only get third, receiving fifteen pounds from a moderate three-year-old in Roseworthy. How Colonel Hall Walker ever came to run him I don't know. But the fact remains that in the St. Leger Night Hawk left Roseworthy a long way behind him at even weights and, furthermore, won in the fastest time ever recorded up to that year.

That year, 1913, also stands out because of another very bad animal in Aboyeur winning the Derby on the disqualification of Craiganour. He and Signorinetta were easily two of the worst I have ever known. And yet the clever stable behind Aboyeur were supposed to have backed the horse to win a fortune. Certainly, they could get liberal odds to their money. So lightly did the layers esteem the horse that they vainly offered 100 to 1 against him.

In bygone years, of course, with the famous Mr. W. B. Purefoy as the master brain, the Druid's Lodge establishment pulled off some of the greatest *coups* in the history of the Turf. The late John Corlett used to call them the Hermits of Salisbury Plain. Druid's Lodge had always been a training establishment, but when Mr. Purefoy took it over, backed up by Captain

Forester, Mr. A. P. Cunliffe, Mr. E. A. Wigan, and Mr. J. H. Peard, the veterinary surgeon, things began to hum. They started off by installing all the modern improvements to a racing stable. Also, situated as the place was in the middle of Salisbury Plain, they were comparatively free from the nuisance of touts. What they did to the Ring is still poignantly remembered by the racing world. In 1903 and 1904 they twice won the Cambridgeshire with Hackler's Pride and repeated the feat in 1909-10 with Christmas Daisy. In the same years of Hackler's Pride they also won the Jubilee twice with Ypsilanti, on each occasion backing the horse to win them a huge fortune. One does not hear so much of Mr. Purefoy nowadays, which is just as well for the bookmakers. He must be classed amongst the cleverest men the Turf has known. I doubt whether he could have had any serious hope of winning the Derby of 1913 with Aboyeur, otherwise the colt would never have started at 100 to 1. Still, he undoubtedly backed it and also induced one or two of his friends to do the same, among them Arthur Collins, the manager of Drury Lane.

I happened to meet Arthur when the buzzing excitement occasioned by the disqualification of Craiganour had died down when, in reply to the inevitable query, he informed me that he had had a "fiver" each way on Aboyeur.

"Why?" I asked him.

"Well," he said very pleased with himself, "I heard from someone connected with the stable that they all had a little on it and thought it might have an outside chance."

"Who did you back it with?" I enquired.

"So-and-so," naming a bookmaker I had never heard of.

"Are you sure to get your money?"

"I don't see why I shouldn't," he said.

But the very next day poor Arthur came up to me, evidently having thought about the matter, wanting to

know my reason for asking him who his bookmaker was.

“ Well, I think you’ll find he’s a welsher,” I said.

Arthur went off refusing to believe me. But he never got his money.

Backing horses on trainer’s tips is one of the standing jokes of the Turf. In 1911 I had a couple of the crack two-year-olds in White Star and Absurd. I always thought White Star to be the better of the pair, although many other people did not think so. One day at Newmarket with the Middle Park Plate about to come up for decision, Mr. James de Rothschild spoke to me and jokingly enquired which of my two would win. I intended running both horses in the full expectation that one or the other would do the trick.

Mr. de Rothschild and I have been friends for many years. He is a man of a highly original turn of mind and it did not in the least surprise me when, after I had dutifully informed him that as far as I knew White Star was the likelier one, he promptly went off and backed Absurd to win him some thousands of pounds. I will give Mr. de Rothschild the benefit of the doubt and say I don’t think he believed me to be trying to mislead him, although there are many trainers who will run a couple of horses in a race and quite justifiably decline to disclose their real intentions.

The reason he backed Absurd after I told him I thought White Star would win was that the former, in the Glasgow Nursery at Doncaster a month previously, had given just on two stone to a useful two-year-old trained in his stable, named Primrose Morn. But nevertheless Mr. de Rothschild has his bump of humour in the right place. Possibly, also, he thought my tip of White Star to be rather “ absurd.” And the result proved him to be right.

Tipping horses is usually an unthankful business. On one occasion at Liverpool Lord Derby happened to run across me in the paddock and casually enquired if I was going to win a certain race.

"No, I don't think so," I said.

Win the wretched animal did. Afterwards, full of contrition, I went up to his lordship and apologized for putting him off.

"Don't you worry about that, Morton," he replied. "It does not worry me because I never bet."

Still, there are occasional compensations. I had a horse belonging to Mr. Martin Fitzgerald running at Goodwood one year when Mr. J. B. Joel, who with his brother used to entertain at Cowes a party of friends aboard his brother's yacht during the meeting, asked me if I had anything on which they could bet. He had one or two friends who liked to have a bit of a gamble. I told him I thought Aclare to be a racing certainty.

"All right," said Mr. Joel. "I tell you what I'll do. I'll back it for you. You can have £1500 on and you need not pay the money if it loses."

That is the sort of bet I like and I might add that I took mighty good care nothing happened to Aclare in the meantime. They backed the colt down to 6 to 4 on and he won in a canter.

The late Marquis of Cholmondeley was easily the most indefatigable seeker after the truth I think I have ever known. By jove, didn't he love getting the goods right from the fountain-head! Whether it brought him any profit I doubt, because he used to ask all the trainers for tips.

Once the fair sex get the gambling fever they worry the life out of you.

"Oh, Mr. Morton, can't you give me a tip?"

"No, I'm sorry I can't."

"Oh, but you must know what will win," with a pathetic accent on the "must."

"I wish to goodness I did. I should be sorry for those poor bookmakers."

"But you must know." And so on. If you tell them about a horse and it doesn't win, then you are all the fools and idiots under the sun—or probably

a deep-dyed criminal who ought to be in penal servitude. Occasionally the dear ladies will come to you and say :

“What do you think of that fool So-and-so? He told me to back his horse and it was down the course.”

Just now and again—very rarely though—you may receive a nice little present from someone to whom you have given a winner. Cigars and wine are the usual forms of gratitude in these delicate matters, bringing to my mind a little incident concerning Charlie Wood. I happened to meet him in London during the time he was standing down and naturally enquired of him how things were going.

“Rotten.”

“Have a cigar?” I said. “I suppose you have got plenty. You always did.”

“Not me,” replied poor Charlie, shaking his head sadly. “I used to get any amount when I was riding, but not now. They used to ring my bell all day long and I could hear them saying: ‘A parcel of cigars for Mr. Wood. Twelve cases of champagne for Mr. Wood,’ until I got sick and tired of hearing them. I couldn’t find room for all the champagne I used to get. At the finish I had to put it in the pigsties. But now, not a cigar, not a drop of anything.”

“Well, cheer up,” I said, “it will be all right in the future.”

CHAPTER XIX

IT might not be inappropriate if I wind up these reminiscences of mine by saying that it takes a clever man to make money backing horses and, usually ten times more cleverness to keep it. The late Mr. Frederick Swindells, better known to fame as "Lord Freddy," who made more money at the game than any other man of his time—and kept it—delivered himself of one of his characteristic epigrams when he remarked :

"A niver back aught as can talk."

Successfully pursuing that line, he got on in the world so well that the time arrived when he was able to take a house in Berkeley Square, whereupon his friends of the racecourse promptly elevated him to the peerage under the designation of "Lord Freddy." But I am sorry to say that his lordship's motives in seeking the baronial seclusion of Berkeley Square did not entirely emanate from snobbery and a desire to ruffle it with the swells. To be quite candid, Freddy went there because the house he had his eye on was next door to that of the famous Admiral Rous.

Nor did Freddy harbour any delusions about the gallant Admiral being anxious to invite him to dinner. No, Freddy had other ideas in his mind. Some little time before the weights for one of the big handicaps were due, Freddy would comfortably ensconce himself in a quiet place to take stock of the people who called upon the Admiral and by putting two and two together—a process at which he was more than a little adept—could guess what horses would be favourably handicapped.

"Ah, ah," he would chuckle to himself as some

noble lord took his departure, "a thowt t'old beggar wanted a bit o' favour."

Those days, unfortunately, belonged to the distant past, as does the inimitable Mr. Swindells. He made his money by a deep understanding of human nature and a positively uncanny aptitude for divining the intentions of the most astute people on the Turf. I saw a good deal of the old gentleman towards the end of his days when he used to potter about the racecourse taking a fatherly interest in the youngsters. Like John Hammond, he practically gave up betting in the evening of his life and invested his money, leaving behind him not only a fortune of £700,000, but sufficient epigrams about the Turf to fill quite a big volume.

There is no doubt, of course, that racing has always been rich in remarkable personalities. Through the medium of these reminiscences of mine my readers will already have made the acquaintance of a good many men whose careers in the world of sport excited more than a little attention. Therefore, it will not be out of place if I narrate an anecdote or two in connection with a couple of men whose names are still well remembered whenever horses come up for discussion. They were James and Sydney Smith. In the middle seventies they were the talk of the country through the medium of a horse named Rosebery, whom they "laid out" in no uncertain manner to win the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire of 1876.

The veriest novice in Turf matters will fully appreciate the extraordinary character of such a *coup*, for nothing short of a champion could be trained to win a two and a quarter mile handicap against the best stayers of his time and then, a fortnight later, to be pulled out again in a nine-furlong race against what would certainly be the fastest horses in England. Not many bad animals ever succeed in winning the Cambridgeshire and it reveals what a champion Rosebery must have been to have brought off the double.

But then James and Sydney Smith were two very remarkable men. They had started life in the Ring. That, apparently, did not bring them fortune as fast as they wished. So they set about engineering a gigantic *coup* which might bring them the money they wanted and thus render them independent for evermore. I can recall no more astounding feat in the annals of the Turf than the marvellous manner in which the two men succeeded in keeping the secret of Rosebery. This horse, by Speculum out of Ladylike, had never won in his life before the Cesarewitch of 1876. What hopes and fears, what agonies of suspense the Smiths must have gone through during the two years they were waiting for their plans to mature would constitute an epic story of the Sport of Kings. I am quite certain that nothing like it has happened before or since. We have had some notable *coups* in the last generation or so with horses like Hackler's Pride and Christmas Daisy, but there is nothing in the whole history of racing to even remotely approach the cleverness of James and Sydney Smith in first of all discovering, and then successfully training, an animal capable of winning both the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire in the same year.

But they did it and reaped the reward of their patience and perseverance. I can just about recollect the race for the Cesarewitch. It is fifty years ago, so perhaps I may be pardoned for telling in a little more detail the story of how Fred Archer, sworn to secrecy and compelled to live a life of starvation for weeks so that he could ride the weight of 7 st. 5 lbs., cantered in at the head of a big field, leaving the onlookers gasping with astonishment at this unknown horse thus confirming the stories which had been flying all over the country.

The two Smiths had backed their horse to win £100,000, using as their medium those famous men of the Ring, Steel and Peech. That was in the days when you could back horses all over England for big

sums of money with an ease altogether different to these ultra-sensitive times when a commission of £1000 will automatically make a favourite for a big race. The moment the lists for the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire for 1876 were out Steel and Peech snapped up all the long odds on offer, and on October 10, when the Cesarewitch was run, the owners of Rosebery were on the tenterhooks of suspense.

To give them their due, they went about their business as calmly as if nothing extraordinary was afoot. Altogether, they stood to win the better part of £250,000 on the two races. It was then, of course, no secret that a sensational *coup* might be brought off and the usual stories about nobbling and pulling were all over Newmarket. The touts followed Archer night and day, but the imperturbable Fred went on his way unheeding. Rosebery had been backed from 50 to 1 and more to 100 to 14, and when the field lined up at the starting-post there were a few anxious hearts in the Betting Ring.

Archer soon set their doubts at rest. As soon as the field came into sight he was seen to be leading. One after another challenged him but could make no impression. By four lengths he swept past the post one of the easiest winners of the Cesarewitch ever known. And some of the hearts that had been anxious then began to quake, for an even bigger fortune was at stake a fortnight later.

Everybody pooh-poohed the idea of a horse winning the Cesarewitch and then successfully carrying a penalty in the Cambridgeshire, apart from what seemed to be almost the impossible task of finding an animal capable of winning both races. Once again did the critics make a sad mistake. True, on this occasion Rosebery was not victorious with the same ease he had displayed in the Cesarewitch. A mere neck represented the margin of victory but, of course, it is more than sufficient. This time the public were not slow to follow the stable lead. Rosebery was

backed for pounds, shillings, and pence, and as his number went up in the frame there arose from the Ring a volume of cheering such as can only be heard when the hearts of mankind are gladdened by financial success.

There had been frantic hedging all over England by the bookmakers who had laid the horse in the double. On the day of the race it was practically impossible to get an offer about Rosebery. Constable, who rode the colt, was a man of the most inviolable reputation. He might have made a fortune for himself, at the expense of James and Sydney Smith, had he cared to listen to the voice of temptation. However, the owners knew what they were about when they picked upon him to consummate their gigantic gamble. A brilliant horseman, extraordinarily strong for his weight, and, more important still, implicitly trusted by everybody who knew him, he gallantly rode Rosebery to victory at the head of a tremendous field. And thus closed what might be called the first act in this great romance.

From that time onward the Smiths became famous. James acquired the nickname of "Rosebery" Smith and for a number of years everything went swimmingly. Desiring to consolidate his affairs he then had the misfortune to launch out in a business of which he knew but little. Certainly he had ample foresight, but, like many other great men, he was a little before his time. He put the bulk of his money into a drapery business at Brixton and called it the Bon Marché, leaving the management of it to his sons. Had he lived long enough his judgment of the potentialities would have been fully justified, for to-day the Bon Marché is one of the most successful stores in London. But there is no doubt that poor "Rosebery" Smith lost practically everything he had when he might easily have made another fortune had he lived a few years longer.

I have slightly anticipated events in the lives of these

men. In the early days of their careers they acquired the old *Sportsman* which has recently been incorporated with *The Sporting Life*. They certainly knew the racing game upside down and in a very short space of time they made the *Sportsman* the leading paper of its kind in England. Its racing intelligence was second to none, as would naturally be the case with two such knowledgeable men controlling its destinies. Time has brought changes and *The Sportsman* is no more, to the regret of the older generation who knew it so well and subscribed to it year by year conscious of the fact that its policy was sound and its criticisms the outcome of mature and considered judgment.

But before passing on to other matters I would like to relate an astonishing story of an experience I had with "Rosebery" Smith some time after he had reached the flood-tide of success. I happened to meet him at Doncaster one day when, as I knew, things were going none too well with him. He still had a few horses in training but continually found himself pressed for ready money. That particular day he had an animal named Goldseeker running. Seeing me in the paddock, he came over and said to me in that old-fashioned fatherly way he had: "Now, young fellow, I've got a horse that is going to win to-day. I will also tell you that he will win the Cleveland Handicap and the Portland Plate.

"I'm getting on in years a bit," he continued, "and I can't look after my horses as I should. You can have this horse for £4000."

Well, it sounded all right, if privately I felt a trifle sceptical about such a thing happening. On the Turf you will find all manner of folk who offer to sell you a champion. I was training for "Abington" Baird at the time, and although "The Squire" would buy almost anything in the way of horseflesh, he didn't like losing his money any more than the rest of us.

“ You’re asking plenty of money,” I replied. “ Why not speak to ‘ The Squire ’ himself ? ”

Baird happened to be close by and I put the matter to him.

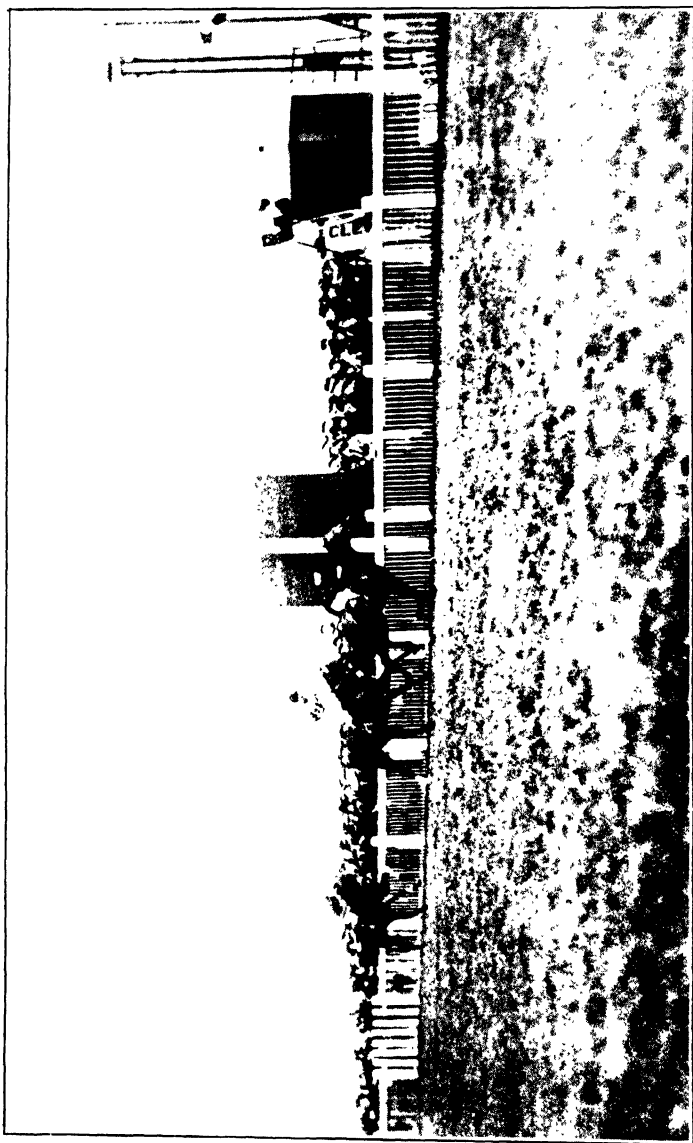
“ What do you think ? ” he enquired. “ It sounds a bit tall. ”

I couldn’t see Goldseeker winning three races off the reel, so the deal didn’t mature. “ Rosebery,” just waiting to put his jockey in the saddle, urged with all his powers of persuasion that we should buy the animal, but in vain. I thought I knew him too well to believe that he would want to dispose of a ready-made winner.

“ He’ll win by the length of a street,” said the owner. “ You’d better have him before it’s too late. ”

I only shook my head and watched Goldseeker leave the paddock, fully convinced that “ Rosebery ” was talking moonshine. Judge of my mortification when he won the race by a dozen lengths. The following day he was pulled out again to win the Cleveland Handicap, and the day afterwards made another appearance—and a successful one—in the Portland Plate. But even that did not complete the fiery coals that were heaped upon my head. A week later, starting at 5 to 4, Goldseeker won the rich September Handicap at Manchester. What Baird and I said to each other need not be recapitulated here. We were in quite a chastened mood for some weeks, and I verily believe that if anyone had come along and offered us a donkey with the tale that it would win the Derby, we would have bought it like a shot.

One might think that after such a bitter experience we would not again venture to look “ Rosebery ” Smith’s gift horses in the mouth. But, alas and alack, one lives but does not necessarily learn. Or, at any rate, time effaces poignant memories of the past. A couple of years after the Goldseeker episode—“ The Squire ” and I were still together—“ Rosebery ”



YOUR MAJESTY WINNING ST. LEGER, 1908

Smith once more put golden opportunity in my way. I happened to be at Chester where I was running a horse named Father Confessor, whom I have previously mentioned in this book.

“A couple of years ago,” remarked old “Rosebery,” “when you were a little younger than you are now, I offered you a horse and you would not have him.

“Now,” he went on impressively, “although I don’t know why I should give you the chance, I want to tell you I have got another just as good. The price is the same as before—£4000—will you have this one?”

He explained to me that the horse in question, Tyrant, would win not only the Chester Cup, but also the Great Cheshire Stakes on the following day. The latter race was the one in which I intended running Father Confessor. Furthermore, I fancied my horse more than a little and I did not altogether like the idea of being told my horse had no chance. Also, it might have been that “Rosebery” was trying to get a bit of his own back. He knew Baird had plenty of money, as he was also aware that we fancied Father Confessor. However, as I have already said, I was a little younger then than I am now, and in those days £4000 was a lot of money for a horse. I spoke to “The Squire” about Tyrant and he would not listen to the suggestion of buying him.

Judge, then, of our feelings when Tyrant not only won the Chester Cup without being extended, but on the following day made a hack of Father Confessor. But even that did not complete our cup of sorrow. Within the space of a few weeks Tyrant won four more good handicaps. Then “Rosebery” sold him to Mr. M. Singer, who must have been very pleased with his bargain when Tyrant went on to win the Great Northern Handicap at York, the Doncaster Spring Handicap (in which he beat Nunthorpe and L’Abbesse de Jouarre, two of the best horses of their time), the Gold Vase at Ascot, and the Doncaster Cup. There’s a tragedy if you like! Of course, you may

go all through the remainder of your life and never experience such bad luck again. Times without number have I bought promising horses for big sums. Some have proved profitable, others entirely the reverse. If you believe all the fairy tales you hear in racing you will most assuredly end in Carey Street.

The Turf, like Topsy, just "growed," but how i "growed" but few race-goers of the present generation can realize. In the days when I was serving my apprenticeship at the Sport of Kings racing was a happy-go-lucky pastime enlivened by many things that would not be tolerated to-day.

One only needs to glance at the character of the crowds who nowadays patronize racing to understand what a change has come over the game. Fifty years ago you never saw the middle classes thronging the racecourses as they do to-day. The aristocracy and the professionals kept it going then. With the exception of open meetings like Epsom and Doncaster it was but rarely that more than a thousand or two people would be in evidence. Those times, as I need hardly explain, are but relics of the dim and distant past. But racing only became popular when it had become safe. Such a miracle did not take place in a day. It was almost entirely due to the indefatigable efforts of gallant old Admiral Rous that the racecourses of England were purged of the ruffianly gangs who made it their stamping-ground for all manner of nefarious schemes, from the open pulling of horses to daylight robbery. Years before, in his young days in the Navy, Rous had made a wonderful name for himself by bringing safely home a rudderless ship, *Pique*, all the way from Labrador when it looked long odds on everybody being lost. The magnificent courage he displayed in this incident soon found its outlet when he became a Steward of the Jockey Club, and for

something like thirty years he was indeed a power in the land.

The present Rules of Racing largely owe their origin to the old Admiral, who not only revised them from beginning to end but added many more for the express purpose of checkmating the frauds that were then all too rampant. A great man indeed, calm of presence, exceedingly dignified in his bearing, the terror of all evil-doers. They called the Admiral an autocrat, and no doubt he was. Nevertheless he made the Jockey Club a wealthy, independent body capable of ruling racing far more effectually than anyone dreamt possible, and when he died, in 1877, he had the distinction of having races at Newmarket, Ascot, and Goodwood named after him. There is also a hospital at Newmarket to pay tribute to his memory, so that so long as English racing endures the name of Admiral Rous will always be carried in remembrance.

In these parlous times, when we have both the totalisator and the Pari-Mutuel, it is interesting to recall that they used to talk about it fifty years ago, though it was then known as the Paris-Mutuel from the fact that it originated in the French capital. It is in connection with the machine that I recollect an amusing story of Admiral Rous in the days when everybody looked upon him as the Napoleon of Newmarket. An enterprising gentleman of Scottish descent known as Andy Anderson, somehow or other got hold of a Paris-Mutuel machine and brought it to England with the idea of amassing a sure and certain competence.

For a time, at least, all went well with him. People were attracted by the novelty of the scheme, and Andy regularly took his ten per cent without evoking anything more than an amount of ribald comment from the bookmakers. But one ill-fated day when Andy's assistant was wheeling the Paris-Mutuel through Newmarket, *en route* to the day's racing, Admiral Rous pulled him up.

“What’s that you’ve got there, my man?”

“Only an old organ, Admiral. *You* know what I mean,” with a meaning wink.

“No, sir, I don’t know what you mean,” snapped the Admiral. “Let me have a look at the infernal thing.”

And then and there, the Admiral made poor Andy’s assistant bring the machine into the Jockey Club Rooms, where lengthy explanations did not prove effectual. Not only did the Admiral confiscate it, but he also said that if he saw Andy with another he would warn him off Newmarket Heath. However, things have progressed a little since then. The totalisator is at least an improvement on the Betting Tax, though to be sure our Government will be reluctant to legalize wagering.

When Charlie Hibbert died a few years ago he must have had something like half a million owing to him. But what would ordinarily have caused most men sleepless nights never worried my friend Charles, who could ask one of his debtors to have a bottle of wine with him fully conscious of the fact that there was a thousand or two owing which he would never receive.

One day at Doncaster I happened to be near Hibbert while he was betting. A man came up and asked what he would lay him So-and-so.

“Three to one,” said Hibbert.

“A thousand to three hundred?” asked the client.

“Right,” replied Charlie.

After the man had gone I asked who he was.

“I don’t know,” said Charlie. “He’s been betting with me for a few weeks and he already owes me a couple of thousand. I know he’ll never settle. They’re offering one hundred to eight about the same horse next door and yet he comes to me and takes three to one.”

I relate this little anecdote, trifling in itself, to prove the utter impossibility of making bets recoverable at

law. If the average bookmaker on the rails could get all the money owing to him he would be a millionaire. Successful plunging on the grand scale could never be carried out with "ready iron." Credit betting is the basis of it all and therefore it is only to be expected that backers will occasionally "take the knock," just the same as they do in other and more allegedly reputable walks of life.

One must say that considering the thousands of pounds that are wagered by a nod of the head, without a single written word in proof, it is little short of marvellous how few disputes take place and how few men repudiate their liabilities. Most of the big plungers of the past, from the notorious Wales, he who banked his fortune on Archer and could do no wrong for years, to the Yankee gambler Walton, went on betting for quite a long time after their actual cash was exhausted. The way the Ring stood the redoubtable Theodore F. Walton was something to remember—or should have been. An ordinary respectable citizen would not have got one-tenth of the credit that Walton had thrown at him by some of the hardest-headed inhabitants of "Tatt's." And one fine Monday morning at the Victoria Club, when Theodore's account was missing, the wailing and gnashing of teeth was something to remember to your dying day.

Not all the legislation in the world will kill this sort of thing. Bookmakers are like ordinary business men. They naturally like to discover customers with plenty of money, and if in the process thereof it is painfully brought home to them that their client hasn't quite as much as they thought, well, it is only an experience such as is suffered by many other folk. Possibly, with a third party intervening and wanting more than a fair share of the profits, betting will undergo a radical change. The Turf is fast becoming commercialized and perhaps I may be pardoned if I suggest that much of its old-time charm will disappear when pounds, shillings, and pence play a predominant-

ing part in the policy of its rulers. However, other times, other methods. The advocates of the totalisator confidently inform us that mechanical betting will revolutionize racing and it merely remains to be seen how far they are right.

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